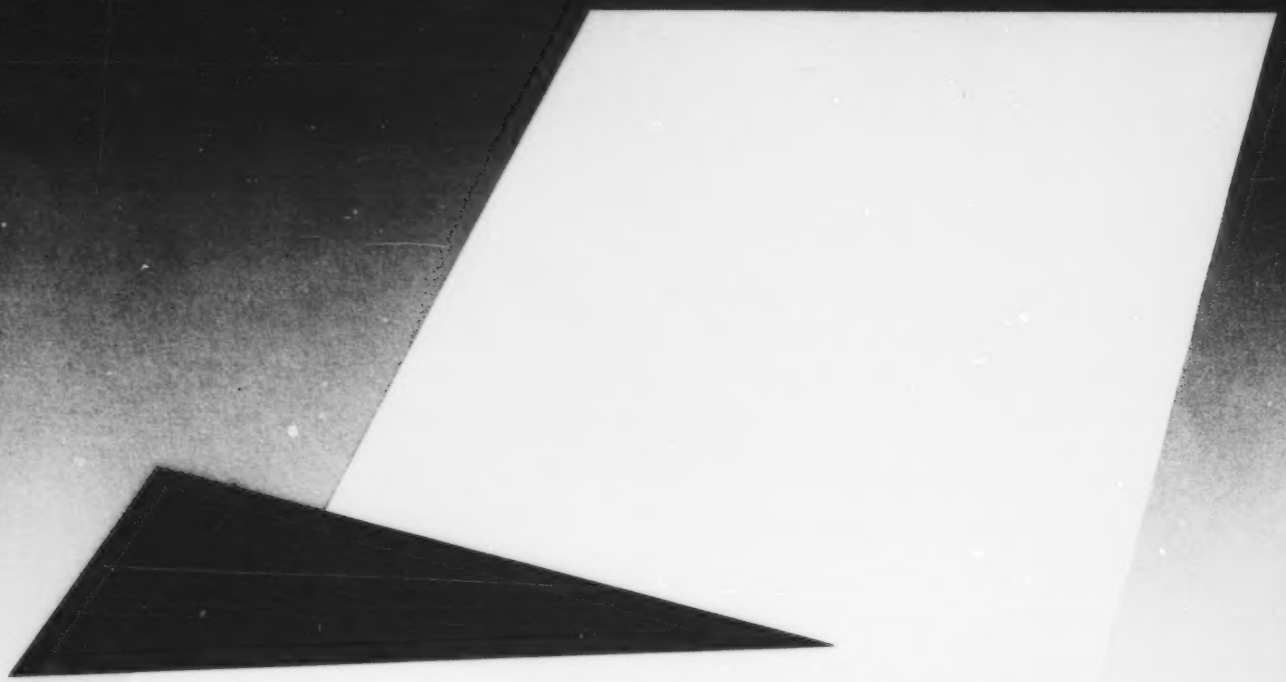
LEADING THE WAY: A BLUEPRINT FOR SASKATCHEWAN



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LEADING THE WAY: A BLUEPRINT FOR SASKATCHEWAN

Final Report of Consensus Saskatchewan

Consensus Saskatchewan

SEPTEMBER 15, 1990

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On September 1, 2005, Saskatchewan will celebrate its one hundredth anniversary. Our province has changed tremendously since its establishment in 1905. Our people have met many challenges, building a society of which we are very proud.

We are now in a critical period in our development and we look to the 21st century with some uncertainty. Many forces are acting together which point to the need for our province and our people to prepare for change. Our resource-based economy is troubled as we enter a new era of global competition. The need for diversification of our economy is clear. Our population is in transition. New social and economic pressures are having an impact on the people of our province and on the communities in which they live and work. Demographic changes are an important issue for us as we look into the decades ahead. Governments at the provincial and national level face the challenge of responding to conflicting demands for service and balanced budgets.

When faced with such challenges, our survival and growth as a province depends on our willingness to seek out opportunities in times of change. To assist our province in responding to change, Consensus Saskatchewan was established by the provincial government in May 1990, to guide the development of a new Saskatchewan blueprint for the future.

Our mission and plan of action involved gathering the ideas of Saskatchewan people about the future of our province and considering background information around four major theme areas: growth and well-being of people; security and stability of communities; expansion and diversification of the economy; and, responsible and efficient management of resources.

Leading the Way: A Blueprint for Saskatchewan is the outcome of this process. It includes:

- a vision for the future of our province that reflects the values and aspirations of Saskatchewan people;
- detail on the vision in the form of goal statements; and,
- recommendations for action toward achieving goals.

Together, the vision of the future, the goals and recommendations for action form a blueprint of our province to guide the efforts of our provincial government, our municipal governments, our institutions and our communities. At a more personal level, this blueprint can guide our individual efforts as we work toward the common goal of continuing to build the kind of province we wish to have in the future.

The vision of the future described in this report is titled "From Many Peoples Strength". This vision comes from the many ideas and views which the Consensus Saskatchewan members heard expressed at the public meetings held in May and June, 1990. The title is borrowed from the motto found on the provincial Coat of Arms. We have taken the liberty of expanding upon the original meaning which referred to the strength of people of many ethnic origins. In the vision of Saskatchewan in the future, we suggest a broader interpretation to include the strength of many individual people working together.

We believe there is consensus among Saskatchewan people on a vision of our province in the future that is built upon the strength and the pride of our people. We will have a society that provides opportunities for individuals to reach their full potential but we will demand individual responsibility and accountability. Family will be the foundation for building individual values and community values. Education will be a fundamental priority. We will use a community-based approach to economic and social development. Our economy will have diversified from our traditional strengths, offering an attractive business climate based on the new competitive advantages of the 21st century. We will manage our fiscal resources wisely, ensuring accountability and responsibility on the part of government and all publicly funded institutions.

To achieve the vision described, the report outlines a series of goals and recommendations for action. The goal statements are often general, pointing us in the way Saskatchewan people wish the province to go. The recommendations for action are intended to give some direction as to how we might proceed as a province toward attaining those goals. Together these give the outlines of the blueprint for the future of the province.

It was not the intent of Consensus Saskatchewan to determine in detail how to achieve the vision and goals described. That is the next step.

Recommendations for the growth and well-being of people are toward the development of independent, responsible individuals who are accountable for their actions. The family and community are both vital in developing these attitudes and values, and the skills to cope with a changing world. Individual responsibility for good health is linked to consumer driven health care. Along with the need to provide better information on health care use, we recommend that consideration be given to a health care premium, utilization fee, co-payment or provincial taxable benefits. This relates directly to wise use of our fiscal resources. Among the recommendations concerned with improving the economic position of everyone is the introduction of an employment equity plan that is universally mandatory in all government sectors.

Recommendations toward community security and stability concern the need for political and individual accountability in a more participatory form of democracy which begins at the community level. Free votes in the legislature, plebiscites and a recall mechanism are among the means to achieve this. Regionalization and decentralization of public services are cited as key elements to ensure effective delivery of provincial and municipal government services, while contributing to the economic survival of communities. Common boundaries for the delivery of a full range of public services are recommended along with local identification of service needs and evaluation of results.

Expansion and diversification of the economy begins by placing a priority on local initiative and involvement in economic development. We must process what we produce and also must investigate new opportunities to develop industries which capitalize upon our science and technology. Support for research and development and technology transfer is essential. The climate for business development must be enabling, but we must conserve our natural environment. Opportunities to develop an industry based upon production of environmentally safe products and services should be pursued.

The first goal for the responsible and efficient management of our financial resources is bold — that Saskatchewan will have a balanced budget and be debt free. To achieve this, action must be taken immediately. Recommendations include some tough measures, such as legislation which restricts the opportunity for deficit financing and implementation of a special tax targeted toward reducing the

accumulated debt. The target is to have a balanced budget in the year 1993, be debt free by the year 2015 and have an accumulated surplus which is equal to 20% of budgetary expenditures in the year 2025. Other recommendations are the need to evaluate government involvement in business of all types and that privatization should be based on a solid business analysis, not political ideology.

The goal is to create a society that lives within its means, in which accountability is ensured at all levels of government and within all publicly-funded institutions, including those that deliver health care and education. Access to information and public participation in decision-making are essential in achieving such goals. Realignment of programs on a regional basis, assessment of need and reasonable but competitive tax structures are among the means recommended toward achieving the goals outlined.

To build the future described, the Province of Saskatchewan requires the co-operative efforts of our governments — provincial, municipal and federal. It requires innovation in our social institutions — education, health care, social support systems and other community services. It requires the will of the people of our province to create the future we desire.

The volunteers who have participated in developing this vision as members of Consensus Saskatchewan believe there is such a will among Saskatchewan people. We urge each and every Saskatchewan person to work together toward achieving a new future for our province. Together we can begin *Leading the Way* for the rest of Canada.

Purpose of the Report

Leading the Way: A Blueprint for Saskatchewan is the Final Report of Consensus Saskatchewan. *Leading the Way* describes a vision for the future of Saskatchewan and proposes recommendations to help us achieve our vision. The report is to be a catalyst for action by the Government of Saskatchewan and by the many individuals, businesses, communities, institutions and groups who care about creating a better future for all Saskatchewan people.

This vision for Saskatchewan and the recommendations for action were developed by the members of Consensus Saskatchewan. They are based on the hopes and dreams of the people of Saskatchewan which were gathered through a series of 108 public meetings held throughout Saskatchewan during May and June of 1990. As well, Consensus Saskatchewan members utilized information contained in a number of briefs from organizations, individuals and a variety of experts on the topics under consideration, and deliberated extensively.

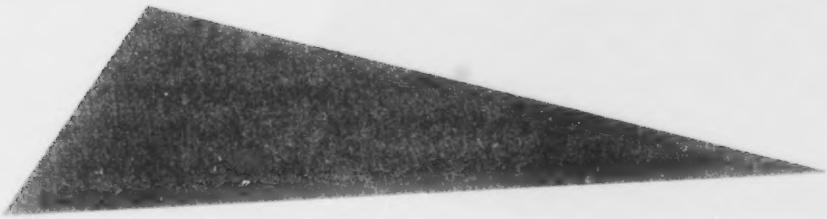
The report begins with a brief description of Consensus Saskatchewan as a process and its rational. The challenges facing the province are outlined. The vision narrative describes Saskatchewan's future. The plan of action establishes goals for us as a province and includes recommendations toward achieving them. The final section of the report includes summary comments, as well as recommendations on follow-up to the 1990 Consensus Saskatçhewan process.

Throughout this document, the terms aboriginal or aboriginal people are used to refer to all persons of Indian or partial Indian ancestry.

Consensus Saskatchewan began when fifty men and fifty women, from all corners of the province and all walks of life, met together in Regina to learn about the challenge before us in leading the process. As volunteers of Consensus Saskatchewan, we had the privilege of meeting with more than 2,200 Saskatchewan people from more than 270 communities and surrounding rural areas. The people who attended these meetings often drove many kilometres to give their time and their energy, to dream of what Saskatchewan can be, what it must be to survive into the 21st century. We volunteered countless hours and drove hundreds of thousands of kilometres of rural roads to gather the hopes and dreams of Saskatchewan people and to synthesize all we learned into our report. Most importantly, we learned of the courage of those like the woman at the Regina meeting who "dared to hope again that things could be better".

This report represents the final step in a process first considered by the Government of Saskatchewan during its Speech from the Throne in March 1990, and initiated in May. It is not the final step. Consensus Saskatchewan volunteers agree that this report is simply the beginning.

DEVELOPING A BLUEPRINT: Consensus Saskatchewan



Consensus Saskatchewan was announced by the Government of Saskatchewan in its Speech from the Throne in March 1990, and initiated in May to guide the development of a blueprint for the future. Consensus Saskatchewan is led by a group of volunteers whose mission is

> **"To reach consensus in creating a vision for our province that will meet the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century"**

As set out in our original mandate, *Leading the Way* is a vision and a blueprint for the future communicated to the Premier of the Province and to the people of Saskatchewan in the form of a report. Specifically, Consensus Saskatchewan makes recommendations for action around four major theme areas:

- growth and well-being of people;
- security and stability of communities;
- expansion and diversification of the economy; and,
- responsible and efficient management of resources.

Consensus Saskatchewan began its mission by urging all Saskatchewan people to participate in developing the vision for the province through a series of 108 public meetings held throughout Saskatchewan in May and June of 1990. During this seven week period, Consensus Saskatchewan volunteers gathered the ideas and the dreams of over 2,200 Saskatchewan people in a process which encouraged small discussions. Much like a "coffee row", Saskatchewanians were asked to sit, sip coffee and share their vision of what is needed to survive and prosper in the 21st century. Many also expressed their views in phone calls, letters, or written briefs. As well, Consensus Saskatchewan considered background materials and research relevant to their task. A general summary of the views expressed in the public meeting phase is presented in the mid-term report, *Saskatchewan Speaks*, prepared by Consensus Saskatchewan and released August 3, 1990.

Consensus on a Blueprint

The rationale for Consensus Saskatchewan can be illustrated through an analogy. Developing a blueprint for a province is somewhat like designing a building by first developing the blueprint plans. The designers will first have some kind of vision of the building they wish to create. They must know its purpose. An office building is much different from a store. They will have a sense of the design features they want to incorporate and how the building will fit with its setting — other buildings, trees and grass, and so on. The first vision of the plan will be expressed in positive terms, perhaps something like this:

> **"Our building is two storeys, with plenty of glass to let in the light. The bottom floor is shop space while the top floor is office space. The building is accessible to people with physical disabilities. The space surrounding makes room for trees and a flower bed".**

When everyone agrees upon the vision for the building, it is then possible to create the blueprint. This becomes the guide for the builders and contractors. Work begins on the basic framework and then can carry on independently based on the outline of the plan. Different people can work on different parts of the building, as long as they use the blueprint as the guide. The component parts will fit together because the builders followed the blueprint guide.

Designing a province for the future is like designing a building. We begin with a vision for the type of province we wish to create. Then we begin to add the details - filling in the picture until we have a blueprint for the province. Individual communities may form the "rooms" of the blueprint. These communities may, in turn, develop a vision and a detailed blueprint which fits within the provincial vision and blueprint but meets the needs of the people of the community, much as individual rooms in a building are designed and decorated.

The importance of consensus on the vision and blueprint is clear. We cannot continue building our province if we cannot agree on basic elements. We will not be able to make choices among options available to us if we have not agreed on our priorities. If resources are scarce and times are hard, it becomes possible to make tough choices to give up some of the "extras" in our blueprint, if there is clear agreement on the priorities and the vision.

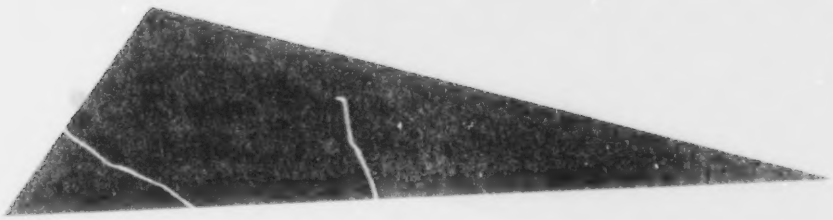
In the creation of a vision for a society, a province or a community, people look to governments to provide leadership. In a democratic society, the leadership position

of government is granted through the will of the people. The vision of a society which a government works toward is really that of the people that the government serves. The vision for society thus transcends partisan politics to be one which balance the interests of all the people.

Government as an institution cannot create a blueprint for society independent of the people it serves. The power of the Consensus Saskatchewan process is that government is asked to work as a partner with the people of Saskatchewan in the creation of a blueprint for the future. The basic outlines of this vision are designed by the people of Saskatchewan while government becomes one of the many institutions involved as "builder, engineer or contractor" to make the blueprint become a reality. Consensus Saskatchewan is a process for the participation of Saskatchewan people in the design of government policy to create the kind of society they wish to have.

Consensus Saskatchewan is a response to the challenges we face as a province, as well as a response to the deeply felt need of people to be directly involved in shaping their own destiny. Many times during the public meetings of Consensus Saskatchewan, people underlined the need for a positive attitude in taking charge of our own future. A shared vision for the province will help create that positive attitude which in turn will move us all to action.

THE CHALLENGES BEFORE US



The Foundations of our Province

"From Many Peoples Strength", from the Latin MULTIS E GENTIBUS VIRES, is the motto on the Coat of Arms of Saskatchewan which was given Royal Proclamation on September 16, 1986. The Coat of Arms is designed and coloured to express the various aspects of the province — the gold for our wheatfields, green for our forests and grasslands, red for the western red lily and brown for our fertile soil. It is a visual expression of our province, meant to communicate what is unique about us. Through its symbols and words, it summarizes in an abstract way, who and what we are.

Saskatchewan is rich in natural resources: the northern forests, rivers and lakes; the south and central prairies with millions of acres of arable land; the clean air and wide horizons; and the riches beneath the ground — oil and gas, potash, uranium, precious metals.

Saskatchewan is also rich in people: the aboriginal peoples whose ancestors first came to this region in prehistoric times; the descendants of furtraders and immigrants who came to our region in the 19th and early 20th centuries; and the many new immigrants who have chosen to come and live in our modern province of Saskatchewan.

In his book, Saskatchewan: A History (1980), historian John Archer introduces us to Saskatchewan with a description of the central role that land played in the history of our region. The aboriginal peoples of our province were the first to create a way of life based on the riches that the land had to offer. The natural environment and

the many animals who found their habitat in the forests or on the plains, together with the skills and efforts of the people, were the foundation for the economy in the early history of our region. Aboriginal culture and social institutions are closely tied to the land.

The next economic and cultural wave came with the furtraders in the 18th and 19th centuries who sought the riches and the opportunities that the northern and western forests and plains had to offer. In 1867, Canada acquired Ruperts' Land from the Hudson's Bay Company and began to lay down the foundations for the major period of immigration which opened up the agricultural lands of the west. The Canadian Pacific Railway provided the necessary infrastructure to bring vast numbers of settlers to the West and to take their products to market in the East. Technological developments in agriculture enabled the productive use of the vast tracts of arable land found in Saskatchewan.

From the earliest prehistory, it was the land that provided a basis for economic survival and success in this region we now know as Saskatchewan. It was the people, aboriginal people and later the immigrants from offshore and from elsewhere in North America, who built the social and political institutions which make up the society we have here today.

On September 1, 1905, Saskatchewan officially became a province of the Dominion of Canada, setting in motion the evolution of our modern economic, social and political institutions.

Through various periods of our history, Saskatchewan people have had a vision of the society which they wished to create. When a society shares a vision and when its people know and acknowledge that vision in their values and in their priorities, a society prospers. People are motivated to create social, cultural and economic institutions which serve their priorities.

When the vision for a society is not shared or not well understood, people can feel alienated and powerless, without the drive to succeed. A Coat of Arms as a visual expression for a people or a society has no effect if not everyone shares that vision and feels its meaning.

While our land and peoples have laid the foundation for our province, we are facing challenges as a province which make our future uncertain. What we know is that we cannot project a future based on expectations that things will remain as they are in our province today, or as they have been in the past. The changes in Canada and

around the world demonstrate how rapidly our assumptions about our world, our country and our province can change. What we can do is plan for our own future — create a vision of what we wish to achieve in Saskatchewan and then pursue that vision with all of our will.

THE SASKATCHEWAN OF TODAY

We are now in the last decade of the 20th century, 85 years after the creation of our province. As a province we have matured and changed. We also face many challenges as a people, based on the economic and social trends which affect not just our province, but the rest of the world. To examine the Saskatchewan of today, the following sections look first at our people, then at our communities and social institutions, our economy, and then the financial resources which we have as a province in order to meet the needs and the aspirations of our people.

Our People

The provincial motto, "From Many Peoples Strength" captures in a single phrase the essence of Saskatchewan. Says John Archer, in his book (1980, page 348)

> **"The Saskatchewan identity - or ethos - was shaped by people's accommodation to a stark frontier environment ... The vastness of the country, the starkness of the environment and the helplessness of the individual made cooperation a first need and a first principle. At the same time there was need to hope for a better world".**

The cooperative spirit of Saskatchewan people is evident in our social and cultural institutions. The emphasis on a better world is evident in the priority Saskatchewan places on education, health care and social support systems. Providing these services to a dispersed, rural population was always a challenge which often called for innovative approaches.

Saskatchewan people are also ethnically diverse. Beginning with the ancestral aboriginal peoples, the historical origins of Saskatchewan are based on emigration from elsewhere on the globe. In particular, the opening of the agricultural lands of the prairies heralded an unprecedented wave of immigration and population growth in our province which has yet to be matched in Canada.

The growth and well-being of our people have always been priorities. However, we face many challenges to ensure that all Saskatchewan people have access to opportunities to fully realize their potential while at the same time keeping the costs

of education, health care, job creation and other social support systems in line with the resources available.

Here are some interesting facts and trends about the people of our province.

- Our population numbers stabilized early and have grown little since the middle of the century. The Saskatchewan population increased 10 fold in the period 1901 to 1936 when it reached more than 931,000. The population first exceeded the 1,000,000 mark in 1984. In 1989, the provincial population as registered by the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan was 1,036,862.
- The age structure of our population has changed dramatically. The percentage of young people 0 - 19 years of age reached its peak from 1957 to the early 1970's and has been declining ever since.
- Population projections differ between the southern and northern parts of the province (within the Northern Administration District). The projection for the provincial population shows the 0-19 age group making up approximately 25% of the total population in the year 2009 but making up approximately 50% of the northern population at the same time.
- The greatest rate of increase in our population is among our aboriginal peoples, with a larger proportion of young people than the population of Saskatchewan as a whole. The Saskatchewan Indian and Native Affairs Secretariat estimates people of aboriginal ancestry make up approximately 11% of the population in 1990. Statistics Canada 1986 Census Data show a total of 77,650 of aboriginal ancestry, somewhat less than the department estimate.
- Our families are getting smaller. Our average family size has declined from 4.1 persons in 1941 to 3.2 persons in 1988.
- More women are in the work force. In 1975, the work force was nearly 70% male and about 30% female. The figures are now closer to 55% and 45% males and females respectively.
- The number of day care spaces has increased from 1,000 in 1973 to approximately 6,000 spaces in 1989.
- Approximately 6% of our population is receiving social assistance. This is an increase over the 4% experienced in the late 1960's and late 1970's. The level peaked previously at about 6% in 1973.

- We earn more per person than we did in previous decades. In real dollar value, per capita personal income has grown from about $4,000 through the decade of the 1950's to about $12,000 in the decade of the 1980's.
- Where our children attend school has changed. Saskatchewan Department of Education statistics show that in 1931, 90% of school enrolment was in rural areas. By 1989, this figure had reduced to 44%. Town and city enrolment, at about 2% in 1931, has risen to 54% in 1989.
- Our student-teacher ratio has declined, from a high of 32:1 in 1901, levelling out to approximately 25:1 from the 1920's to about 1960, and then further declining to approximately 17:1 today.
- Elementary and secondary school enrolment peaked in excess of 250,000 in 1970 and has declined ever since. Enrolment appears to be levelling at approximately 200,000.
- The demand for post-secondary education continues to increase. The number of persons enroled in universities in 1987 was approximately 23,000, about 7 times greater than enrolment in the 1950's.
- More and more women are entering post-secondary education. Since 1981, the number of degrees awarded to females has exceeded the number awarded to males each year.
- For the majority of our population, life expectancy has increased. At close to 80 years on average, women continue to enjoy a greater life expectancy than men. As a result there are more elderly people in general in our population and more elderly single women in particular. This situation has special implications for our health care and social support services.
- Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics figures show that since 1983/84, Saskatchewan has had the second highest provincial crime rate, next to British Columbia. The nature of that crime seems to be changing. Indications are that violent crime is increasing while property crimes took a downturn in 1989 after a 54% increase in the past decade.
- Saskatchewan's incarceration rate of 84 per 10,000 adults in 1979/80 has increased by 25% to 105 adults per 10,000 by 1988/89.

- Of particular concern is the degree to which people of aboriginal ancestry are over-represented in our criminal justice system relative to their proportion of our population. While people of aboriginal ancestry make up approximately 11% of our total population, they represent 65% of all sentenced admissions in 1988/89.
- While alcohol purchases per person continue to decline in the province, a trend which began in the mid- 1970's, alcohol and drug abuse continue to be serious issues in our society. Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission figures show that in 1986, Saskatchewan had the highest incidence of alcohol and drug related offences among all the provinces at 64.6 offences per 1,000 persons. As a percentage of all traffic accidents, alcohol related accidents decreased to a low of 7.8% in 1988, down from 10.2% in 1981. However, when looking at fatal accidents, more than 40% were alcohol related.
- Over the last 25 years, suicide rates in Saskatchewan, as in all of Canada, have been increasing. Saskatchewan's average suicide rate for 1981/85 was third highest among the ten provinces, following Quebec and Alberta. Evidence suggests an association, although not necessarily a causal relationship, between alcohol and other drug involvement in suicides, particularly among those of aboriginal ancestry.
- While our population numbers have remained relatively stable, access to and use of medical services is increasing. Saskatchewan Department of Health statistics show that the number of "active" physicians in our population has more than doubled, from 523 in 1963 to 1,167 in 1989.
- The number of physician services, in millions of services funded by the Saskatchewan government, has increased by more than 3.5 times during the same period, from 3.5 million services in 1963 to 12.5 million services in 1989.
- Our use of hospitals has increased. In 1947, there were 122,000 admissions and discharges in Saskatchewan. In 1987, there were 211,000. The total provincial population has remained roughly the same at approximately one million people.
- The number of prescriptions has increased from 3.6 million prescriptions in 1977 to 5.7 million a decade later in 1987, an increase of nearly 60%.

- The people in our north are unique in their demographics and in their use of health care, education and other support services. This is due to a combination of geographic, cultural and economic differences. In particular, most communities lack meaningful economic opportunities and development. Unemployment rates range from 50% in La Ronge to 90% in La Loche. School drop out rates are high relative to the south.

- Interest in the arts and culture seems to be growing. In Canada, from 1971 to 1981, employment in the arts and culture sector increased by 102%. Statistics Canada shows substantial continued growth between 1981 and 1986.

- Saskatchewan has historically depended on a grass roots approach to cultural and artistic development. Participation in the arts and culture is an important aspect of our multicultural heritage. Futurists suggest there will be a renaissance of interest and participation in the arts in the 21st century. A resurgence of spiritual values is predicted to be an important aspect of this renaissance.

- Futurists also predict that the family will grow in importance as a stabilizing force in an increasingly complex world.

- There is a continued emphasis on the need for all members of society to have an opportunity to participate in the economic and social life of their communities to the full potential of their physical and mental capabilities.

A trend which is less evident in Saskatchewan but growing across North America is redefinition of individual and societal roles. Individuals are asking for and taking on a greater share of responsibilities in many areas and are relying less on institutions. This trend is true whether it be in health care, education, economic activity, or in taking on social and economic issues such as preservation of the environment. It is also true in political activity, as individuals seek more opportunity to be involved in and take responsibility for decision-making in the public sector.

> **"Canadians remain committed to the objective of a society characterized by social equity. What they have begun to question is the scale, the powers, and the role of government in defining and meeting that objective."**
>
> Cohen, Dian and Shannon, Kristin. *The Next Canadian Economy*, 1984.

A well-educated public armed with globally available information and capital can have a significant influence on the direction of society. Information technology is

changing the way people communicate, work and play. Information technology may hold significant potential for providing the education and other services that a geographically isolated population will require in the future.

Perhaps the most profound aspect when considering our people is the importance of enabling individuals to make a contribution to their society. This thought was echoed many times in public meetings of Consensus Saskatchewan.

> **"Even though I was the youngest person at the meeting, my ideas, my thoughts and feelings were made important and I was a vital part of our small group discussion. I was made to feel like I COUNTED!"**
>
> Consensus Saskatchewan Public Meeting Participant, June, 1990

Our Communities

If we board a plane and fly over the Saskatchewan of today we would see a very different picture than if it had been possible to fly over our province 100 years ago. Before the opening of the agricultural lands to settlement, we would have seen vast tracts of grasslands and parklands in the south and central part of the province and then moved north to see the forests, lakes and streams in the northern half of the province. The physical impact of the small numbers of people, both aboriginal and recent European traders was very light. Communities were small, often nomadic, and linked largely by waterways and small overland trails.

Now the south and central parts of Saskatchewan are mostly agricultural, neatly laid out in squares and rectangles based upon the survey system which preceded the settlement of our province. We have hundreds of small communities dotting the prairies, all connected by either rail links or the vast network of roads that we have built in Saskatchewan.

The legal and administrative structure of land settlement associated with our agricultural economy has had a profound effect on the physical aspect of Saskatchewan and the dispersal of our rural communities. A widely dispersed rural population was the basis for our economy in the first half of the 20th century. The economy of Saskatchewan is now changing and with it the physical fact of where we live and work.

Here are facts about our communities and some of the trends which are having an influence on them.

- Where people live is changing. Thirty years ago, Saskatchewan had over 50% of its population living on farms or in villages. By 1989, only 33% of Saskatchewan people lived in rural areas and nearby communities.
- Regina and Saskatoon were the major recipients of the movement from rural areas, growing by over 60% between 1963 and 1989.
- Today people aged 65 and over make up 13% of Saskatchewan population, but in most towns of 2,000 or less, between 30% and 40% of the residents are 65 and over.
- The situation in northern Saskatchewan is dramatically different, with up to one-half of the residents of most northern communities 20 years or younger.
- Current Saskatchewan legislation defines urban municipalities as follows. A village has a population of 100 or more. A hamlet would have less than 100 people. A village can become a town if the population exceeds 500. When the population of a town exceeds 5,000, it can become a city.
- There are now 688 incorporated communities in the province, of which 530 or 77% are of village and hamlet status. Saskatoon and Regina are the two largest cities at 177,641 and 175,064 respectively. Other cities in order of their population are Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Swift Current, Yorkton, North Battleford, Esteven, Weyburn, Lloydminster, Melville and Melfort.
- Our fastest growing communities are in the north and northwestern regions of the province. Statistics Canada medium term projections for population growth in the decade 1986 to 1996 suggest Saskatoon will experience the most significant growth at about 17%. Other areas of growth would be the Lloydminster and Meadow Lake regions. If current trends continue communities in the south will experience population loss. In early 1990, Statistics Canada projected an overall provincial gain of less than 2% between 1986 and 1996.
- When Saskatchewan experienced its first major wave of agricultural settlement, "community" in the agricultural south meant a grouping of farm families, sharing common services such as schools, town halls and facilities, in particular the grain elevator. Early settlement patterns determined that these should be located about six miles apart on the main rail lines in order to accommodate a reasonable distance for hauling grain by horse drawn wagon.

- Saskatchewan Department of Rural Development figures show that the maximum number of elevators occurred in 1933 when there were 5,758. In 1978, 45 years later, there were 2,423, less than half the peak. As of August 1, 1990, there were 841 elevators in the province.
- While the 1930's are described as the worst economic times our farms and our province have experienced, during that time the actual number of farm operations increased by some 2,300 although the farm rural population declined by 8%.
- The 1970's were the most profitable decade in our farming history. During that same time frame, Saskatchewan lost 9,652 farms (12.5% of the total) and had an outmigration of 46,179 people.
- Currently, the availability of off-farm income is an important factor enabling young farmers to get started and stay in their community.
- Saskatchewan is well served by its road network, especially in the southern half of the province. Saskatchewan Deparment of Highways and Transportation data show that we have 191,000 kilometres of roads under provincial and municipal jurisdiction, linking the villages, towns and cities. This represents the greatest network of road service in Canada.
- Our road network has changed substantially over time. In 1947, we had 250 kilometres of paved roads. In 1989, there was a total of 19,310 kilometres of paved roads.
- As a result of technological innovations in transportation and changes in our economic structure today, many rural residents go to the larger towns and cities for their shopping, recreation, business and health care needs.
- The economic and social restructuring has had an impact on rural children who often travel long distances to get to school. Saskatchewan Department of Education reports that in 1988, 58,086 pupils travelled 352,867 kilometres over 2,350 bus routes in the province.
- Saskatchewan is highly organized in its administration and service delivery structures. There are 538 urban municipalities, 298 rural municipalities, 116 union hospital districts, 45 home care districts, 13 provincial community health care regions, 8 provincial mental health care regions, 108 ambulance districts, 6 provincial social services regions, 115 school divisions, 11 regional colleges, 26 rural development corporations, 55 economic development

committees, 18 district planning commissions, 43 agriculture development and diversification boards, 6 highways districts and a number of recreational zones and districts for the delivery of parks and renewable resources services.

- The north (Northern Administration District) of the province faces the challenge of a population of approximately 40,000 dispersed over half of the province's geographic area. There are 2 northern towns, 12 northern villages and 13 northern hamlets. The rest of the population is highly dispersed. Most communities are very small, isolated and not well served by basic infrastructure such as roads, communications linkages, financial services and public services. Reliance on air travel means the cost of transporting people, goods and services is high. However, air travel is often cost effective when compared to providing the traditional ground transportation systems to isolated communities.

- Communities on Indian Reserves often face similar problems of lack of services and infrastructure. There are 149 Indian Reserves in the province. The total Registered Indian population of Saskatchewan is reported at 72,111. It is estimated by the Saskatchewan Indian and Native Affairs Secretariat that approximately one half of Registered Indians live on reserves, with a gradual trend of movement to urban areas. These urban residents may experience isolation from the economic and social life of the community.

While Saskatchewan communities are changing, the participation of Saskatchewan people in the life of their community is an important part of our culture and our heritage. There is a need to revitalize existing communities and to ensure communities have the means to sustain themselves in changing social and economic conditions.

Our Economy

We in Saskatchewan are challenged to diversify from our reliance on agriculture and resource industries into a broader-based economy. Circumstances for our traditional economic strengths are changing. We can no longer count on improved crop yields or higher prices for commodities to ensure the health of our economy. Saskatchewan is blessed with economic potential and a resourceful people - the question is how best to build on that potential.

Here are some of the economic trends concerning our province. (This information was synthesized from background material provided by the Saskatchewan Department of Economic Diversification and Trade.)

- The production and export of natural resources remain the foundation of our economic system. About 95% of all production in the province directly depends on the basic resources of the province (grains, livestock, oil, potash and uranium and their refined products).
- Farmers, mining companies and the manufacturers processing our primary products purchase the bulk of the non-resource manufactured products and business services produced in the economy. As a result, the vast majority of jobs in the province ultimately depend on the profitability of and prospects for our resource industries.
- Saskatchewan's economy depends on trade. We grow enough wheat to feed 92 million people. More than 90% of the grains and oilseeds produced here is sold to other Canadians or offshore. All of our potash and uranium is used outside the province; 80% of the oil pumped is shipped to other markets; and 30% of the goods processed in the provincial manufacturing industry is exported.
- Saskatchewan is one of only two provinces without direct access to an ocean port. Transportation distances and costs are a major impediment to growth. Transportation costs are estimated to equal approximately 30% of the bulk commodity price.
- We also import the vast majority of what we purchase as consumers, primarily because our population does not provide a large enough local market to produce consumer products at a price we can pay. For example, Saskatchewan people will likely buy about 20,000 automobiles in 1990. This is enough to keep a modern car factory, producing one model, operating for less than six weeks.
- High real interest rates, volatile financial markets, continuing trade wars, weak world-wide demand and correspondingly low prices for our resource exports will continue to present difficulties for Saskatchewan over the coming years. There is no projected return of the resource prices equal to the 1970's.

- Our agriculture sector, which is the main support for the rural community, faces a continuation of low prices, increasing and often unfair competition for export markets, further cost-price squeezes and a severe debt load. Farmers will not provide much impetus for economic prosperity in rural communities in the short term. Consequently, many villages, small towns and ultimately, even the cities, face difficult times.
- The non-agricultural resource industries also face low prices, high interest rates and fierce competition. As a result, if we depend solely on the agriculture and resource sectors, there may not be enough new jobs created in the province to match the labour supply.
- Employment in the service sector accounted for about 70% of total employment in 1989. Agriculture was the second largest employer at 17.3%.
- When jobs are scarce, people leave if they perceive that other parts of the country offer stronger prospects. Since 1985, 69,000 more people have left the province than have arrived. Saskatchewan remains a major exporter of skilled workers.
- Saskatchewan's unemployment rate has historically been about two-thirds to three quarters of the national level. Through the 1980's, unemployment increased from a low of 6% in 1982 to a high of 8% in 1985 and has now averaged out at about 7.5% annually, which is about the national average.
- Small businesses continue to provide the foundation for employment creation in Saskatchewan. More than 93% of businesses fall into the "small business" category, defined as employer firms with less than 50 employees or annual sales of less than $2 million. Almost 40% of the province's total employment is in such firms.
- The most important forces in the global economy today are technology, information and capital. Businesses will increasingly operate through networks, rather than be consolidated under one roof. Geographic isolation need not be a barrier to economic expansion if the communication systems are available.
- Greater international competition for markets will occur. Economic rather than military strength will determine the new superpowers of the future. The thawing of the cold war is changing the distribution of power and will

radically reform trade flows. This will create both problems and opportunities.

- Saskatchewan has a number of features which are favourable to the business climate of the 21st century. In locating businesses, corporate decision-makers now look for new types of advantages which reflect the priorities of the labour force of the 1990's — a clean environment, affordable housing, high quality public services including education and healthcare and communications infrastructure that enables them to take advantage of the modern information technologies. These are the attractions that Saskatchewan has to offer.

It is clear that Saskatchewan must think about its economic development in light of the future trends. In doing so, we must not limit our thinking by our experiences of the past.

Our Resources

The resources of a society might be understood to be all of the assets or stock it has to draw upon to supply its needs. In such a broad context we might include everything from our people and their skills to the naturally occurring resources we have in our environment, such as air, water, arable land, trees, minerals and the like.

In examining the question of resources of our province, many of the resources are considered under the other topic areas of our economy, our communities and our people. What we have left to consider are the fiscal resources of the province which we look to collectively to meet the needs of our people in the way of public services or those services which are not purchased from the private sector.

The role of government in society has changed, particularly in the post war years in Canada with the introduction of many new social support programs and services. The Canadian Tax Foundation (1990) estimates that total government expenditures in Canada, including federal, provincial, municipal and other public sector services, accounted for approximately 47% of our Gross Domestic Product by the mid 1980's. The total for 1988 was 44%, a slight decline from the highs of the mid-1980's. About 60 years earlier, in 1926, the total was about 16% of Gross Domestic Product. Government is now a major factor in the Canadian economy and the Canadian way of life.

The Canadian Tax Foundation also reports that the 1980's have been characterized by deficit financing by the federal and provincial governments in Canada. Debt

charges accounted for approximately 8% of total government expenditures at all levels in 1976 and had increased to 15% of total expenditures a decade later in 1986/87. During 1990/91, the Federal Government plans to reduce its annual deficit by $2 billion, to $28.5 billion.

In considering the resources we have in the public sector we cannot escape the major challenge before us as a province. We are now living beyond our financial means.

Here are some of the facts and trends which are of interest when considering our Saskatchewan resources.

- In Saskatchewan, annual provincial government expenditures on average have exceeded revenues by more than $300 million since 1982/83. In its 1990 March budget estimates, the government projected a deficit of $363 million.
- Borrowing by the Crown Sector of $6 billion coupled with the combined effect of successive deficit budgets since 1982/83 has resulted in a combined accumulated debt of $10 billion.
- Annual interest payments on the debt have become the third largest category of expenditure by the provincial government, after health care and education. Estimates for 1990/91 are $493 million to service the public debt. High interest rates consequently have a serious effect on the expenditures of government. Interest rates are more than 50% higher than they were three years ago.
- Sources of government revenue have changed proportionately over the past five years. In 1984/85, total government revenues were $2.9 billion, of which 40% came from taxes, 30% came from resource revenues, 20% came from other governments (federal transfers primarily), and 9% came from other local provincial sources. In 1990/91, revenues will be $4.28 billion, of which 47% will come from taxes, 9% from resources, 17% from other governments and 26% from other local sources. Tax increases have made up the bulk of the increase in provincial revenue.
- While revenue sources have changed, the major expenditures continue to be on health, education and social programs. In 1984/85, 30.7% of the total budget of $3.3 billion was spent on health care, 19.5 % on education and 15% on other social programs. In 1990/91, the total budget was $4.64 billion of which 32.5 % was spent on health care, 19.1% on education and 15.1% on a combination of social programs.

- Between 1984/85 and 1990/91, the expenditure on public debt increased from 3.1% of the provincial budget to 10.6% of the provincial budget.
- Approximately 40% of the provincial budget is paid to the partners in the delivery of government services, such as school boards, hospital boards, home care boards or the like. Direct government operating costs account for 20% of annual expenditures.
- In the 1990/91 March Estimates, the government estimated $493 million annual interest payments, somewhat greater than the projected budget deficit of $363 million. Without debt to service, the provincial budget could be balanced.
- While budgets are tight, the demand for services continues to grow. For example, the annual use of medical services per person increased from just over ten in 1985 to 12 in 1989. Student Aid funding more than doubled from 1988 to 1991. University enrolments continue to rise. The June 1990 forecast for farm cash receipts for 1990 project a 10% decrease from 1989. This will put continued pressure on government to protect the farm economy.
- Saskatchewan residents are generally high savers but low risk investors relative to others in Canada. Statistics Canada data show that in 1989 we saved approximately $1.4 billion or approximately 10% of all disposable income. Between 1984 and 1990, Saskatchewan residents invested in over $1 billion of government bond offerings.
- Taxation continues to be an issue, both for individuals and businesses in the province.

The Federal government is also burdened with debt and cannot assist the province in solving its problems. The Federal Goods and Services Tax continues to be a contentious issue for taxpayers.

It is clear that government must make astute choices to increase the effectiveness of its limited resources. There is an increasing demand for accountability at all levels of the public sector. There will also be increasing pressure on the public to define its priorities to help government make difficult decisions based on a clear understanding of public will and public consensus.

Conclusion

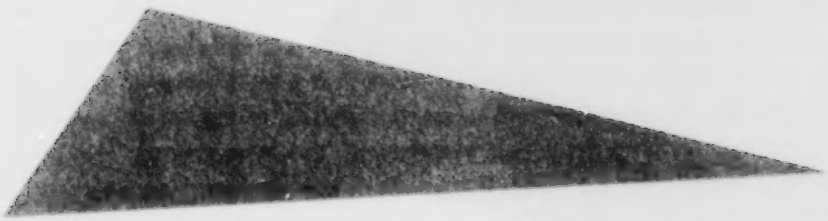
The issues and challenges which confront the province at this time in our history are complex. No single entity in our province can determine the solutions alone.

What is required is a broadly-based approach to realistically assess our opportunities and strengths and to look seriously at our difficulties and options for addressing them. Involvement of all Saskatchewan people is the key to preparing for change. The participation of Saskatchewan people on a human scale, by meeting with one another and developing ideas and solutions through cooperation and partnerships, is perhaps the most effective means to achieve change.

> **"The escalation of complexity (in societies) cannot solve but rather must divert and eventually multiply the problems of already complex societies. And as these problems multiply, it becomes more and more obvious that solutions lie, not in the addition of compensating technologies or in additional layers of interpretation and explanation, but rather in the simplification of social processes so that they fall within the scope of human comprehension and control".**
>
> Robert Gibson, "The Value of Participation", in Environmental Management and Public Participation, n.d.

The process of establishing a shared vision allows Saskatchewan people to deal with the complexities and challenges before them. The vision is what we want to achieve. To achieve our vision, we must set some goals and take some actions which will lead us in the direction we want to go. In effect, the goals and actions are the blueprint which will provide guidance to us as a province as we move toward the 21st century.

FROM MANY PEOPLES STRENGTH: Our Vision For The Future



This is the Saskatchewan of the future. It is a Saskatchewan which was described in many different words by many different people in the 108 public meetings of Consensus Saskatchewan. It is deliberately not dated but it could very well be the Saskatchewan which we celebrate on the one hundredth anniversary of our province, September 1, 2005. It is the Saskatchewan that our children will inherit. It is the province of Canada where many people will wish to live because it is a very fine place to be.

This vision of the future is written in the present tense. Like athletes who achieve success by imagining they ARE the winner not that they will BE the winner, this is a vision of a province that IS rather than a province that MIGHT BE. In reading this vision, we must all place ourselves in the future and see what we are as a province in the 21st century.

The strength of our province is its people. While rich in natural resources and blessed with wide open spaces, Saskatchewan's identity is first and foremost created through its people. It is a region filled with citizens whose pride in the province and confidence in themselves creates expectations and accomplishments as broad as the land's horizons. In the search for a place where people "get the job done", the world comes to Saskatchewan.

The people of Saskatchewan subscribe fully to family and spiritual values. Collectively, the importance placed on these values yields respect for ourselves and others. As a result we enjoy healthy, satisfying lifestyles. People of all ages experience personal fulfilment by leading mutually caring, productive lives.

Saskatchewan's people are vital, integral contributors to the well-being of our province. Our self-esteem allows for effective participation and cooperation in all public processes. This is of particular significance to aboriginal people. Issues such as land settlements, treaties, self-governance, economic development, education, employment and taxation are resolved to the benefit of everyone.

When joined together in communities, our exceptionally spirited people promote education; encourage arts, culture, and recreation; emphasize health and social programs; and foster business through the development of infrastructure. Opportunities abound through jobs and services for people of all ages with many different skills and abilities.

Our educational system is an important foundation of our communities. Through a network of schools and post-secondary institutions, strengthened by modern telecommunications technology, educational opportunities are available to meet the lifelong learning needs of our people wherever they live and work.

With education and training available through the use of advanced technology, business and industry find it attractive to locate in all areas of the province. Our telecommunications and transportation networks enable us to support and enhance a diversified economy and a lifestyle rich in cultural and educational opportunities.

An effective preventive health care program contributes to individual wellness and lowers overall health care costs, thus making more affordable and readily available other needed health care services. Health conscious practices permeate every part of our lifestyle. Fitness has come to embody all the aspects of mental, physical and emotional health. Because we value these, they are the thread that weaves fitness into the very fabric of the province.

Saskatchewan's multi-tiered health care system delivers the full range of health care from basic to highly specialized. Specialized services located in major centres are accessible to all people of the province through the use of transportation and telecommunication networks.

Regionalization within the province is a major factor in sustaining our communities. These effective units of administration, working towards common goals, ensure economic prosperity and viablity. This regionalization, together with excellent telecommunication and transportation networks, plays a major role in assuring that all communities, especially in the north, have access to comprehensive facilities and services.

Saskatchewan is a place where progress is continual and stimulated by the imagination of its people. Our province is home to centres of excellence in a variety of fields such as agriculture, forestry, mining, medicine, health care delivery and environmental protection. Our emphasis on education, focusing on science and technology, enhances Saskatchewan's economic diversification.

Our education and employment opportunities attract and retain a steady in-migration of talented people. Complementary federal and provincial immigration policies attract new citizens with varied skills to settle in all geographic areas of the province. Their innovation and entrepreneurship results in increased business expansion, job opportunities and economic development.

Leadership in the business of environmental preservation and restoration ensures that our province enjoys an attractive, healthy, clean and comfortable environment. We are a centre for environmental research and development. Through technology transfer, innovative products and processes used to regenerate and restore our environment are in great demand on the global market.

Our rapid advance in this industry builds on the strength of our environment that remains among the cleanest on earth. The ensuing benefits, both direct and indirect, increase employment, create wide diversification in industry, improve health and enhance the overall beauty of the province. Saskatchewan serves as a model by which others pattern their own environmental strategies.

Saskatchewan is internationally recognized in many areas of agriculture including cereal grains, market gardens, meat products, and chemical free farm produce. Our farmers continue to harvest the highest quality grains in the world. Farm policies ensure a fair return to our farmers. This results in economically viable farms, both large and small, that meet the needs of producers and consumers. Saskatchewan further diversifies its agribusiness network through value-added processing of its raw agricultural products and development of new agricultural technologies. This redefines and revitalizes our farm communities.

A healthy mining industry contributes to meaningful employment throughout the province, particularly in the northern regions. Potash, oil and gas and other minerals are both extracted and processed for sale in markets world-wide. Our forestry industry is sustained through active reforestation programs and value-added processing of products for export.

Tourism contributes significantly to the wealth of the province. Our national, provincial and regional parks offer a unique opportunity to explore and experience nature. We offer many varieties of outdoor recreation in all seasons. Lakes of clear water generate revenues from tourists who engage in water sports, fishing, and wilderness camping. Tour packages provide economic spinoffs, employment opportunities and new revenues. Tourists are greeted by enthusiastic and friendly people who extend a warm welcome and offer top quality service.

An active research and development program makes us a leader in telecommunications technology. Our fibre optics network and access to satellite distribution systems enable us to attract business which requires state of the art capability. This infrastructure links our centres of excellence in business and education and connects them to their world-wide counterparts.

The media assumes a significant role in promoting all of these positive qualities.

Saskatchewan demonstrates leadership in the wise management of our financial resources. Our provincial government sets the standard for efficient fiscal management resulting in balanced budgets.

Operating surpluses are retained for use in times of need, eliminating deficit financing. This careful stewardship of our fiscal resources enables tax levels to remain stable.

Our people have a high rate of savings, investing in their communities and local companies which contributes to economic prosperity. As a result, we enjoy an extremely high level of employment and a broad tax base supporting our high quality social programs.

An innovative system of community assessment identifies the need for services at the local level. Ongoing evaluation by individual communities is the basis for funding priorities. This decentralized system has reasonable administration costs, allowing services to reach the people who need them.

A "Freedom of Information Act" ensures accountability between all levels of government and the public. The free-flow of information related to the use of public funds and all other aspects of government operation allows Saskatchewan people to be effectively involved in decision-making.

We are a people in control of our destiny with a shared vision of the future. From many peoples' strength and confidence combined together in active communities comes economic development and prosperity for our province. This is our heritage and this is what we give to the future.

REACHING OUR VISION

1. The Growth and Well-Being of People

2. Community Security and Stability

3. Economic Expansion and Diversification

4. Responsible and Efficient Management of Our Financial Resources

1. Growth and Well-Being of People

We believe that the future destiny of the Province of Saskatchewan rests in the hands of our people. The growth and well-being of people is the first step in ensuring a prosperous future for our province.

In 1990 we view challenge and change as opportunities to enrich the life of an individual or the community as a whole. Our commitment ensures that each individual, family group and community plays an important part in determining the future of Saskatchewan. Each person is expected to assume responsibility for his or her personal growth and to serve his or her community.

We are concerned about people leaving our province. We recognize that a stable and growing population is necessary to support our economy and social programs.

We recognize the importance of the arts in our lifestyle. Both the opportunity and the facilities to pursue recreational and cultural activities are necessary.

While we are concerned about the cost of health care, it is important to retain the high quality of our health care system.

We are committed to a life long learning process that empowers people with up-to-date knowledge and skills. Universal access to high quality educational programs is essential. The challenge of providing distance education programs to rural and remote areas of the province must be met.

Individual responsibility and accountability are the building blocks for our social programs. We provide support and assistance for those who need it and we expect personal initiative from everyone.

We seek to increase our participation in developing public policy and making decisions that affect us. All government decisions should be based on merit and need, not partisan politics.

With these thoughts in mind, we have drafted our future vision for the Growth and Well-Being of People in Saskatchewan. We have organized our proposals under the following topics:

- Individuals in Saskatchewan
- Our Families
- Elementary and Secondary Education
- Post Secondary Education
- Aboriginal Education
- Our Health Care System

Our proposals include the recommended action necessary to achieve the specified goal. The next step will be to identify how to implement the recommendations. **It is not our intention to imply that all actions are the responsibility of government. The effective implementation of the proposed actions will demand the creativity, cooperation, and consultation of governments, communities and private citizens.**

INDIVIDUALS IN SASKATCHEWAN

Our Goal Is:

The people of Saskatchewan are independent, responsible individuals who enjoy the basic needs of life including food, adequate shelter, access to educational and employment opportunities. We respect one another and we care about one another. We take pride in each other's successes, and are supportive during times of trouble. We have a positive outlook, and this optimism is contagious.

Recommendations

1.1 Every Saskatchewan community must create an environment that supports all individuals to reach their fullest potential as healthy, contributing members of society, and that fosters individual responsibility and accountability.

The people of Saskatchewan should support activities, and provide programs where necessary, which promote and enhance an individual's healthful lifestyle. The emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of the individual should be strengthened. It is essential to promote the development of life skills, including: interpersonal skills; communications; and the enhancement of self-esteem and respect for others.

Our social support system should have as its goal the development of attitudes and skills that lead to the independence of the individual.

Studies should be undertaken to determine whether local control of our social assistance system may be more efficient and effective and could reduce the potential for abuse.

Government agencies, institutions and volunteer organizations should coordinate their services to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

Flexibility in our social support systems is essential. We should recognize that individuals or families may require varying amounts of support at different stages in their development.

Our income expectations should be reasonable.

1.2 Individuals in Saskatchewan must enjoy freedom from discrimination based on race, colour, creed, religion, sex, marital status, disability, age, nationality, ancestry or place of origin. We support an employment equity plan that is universally mandatory in all government sectors.

Equal access and equal opportunities for education, training and employment should be guaranteed. Proactive programs and legislation for disadvantaged groups including aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities and women, should continue to be provided, updated and enforced. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission should continue to actively monitor adherence to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code.

Employers should be knowledgeable and accept responsibility for eliminating harassment in their workplaces.

1.3 Serious consideration must be given to strategies that address the causes of hunger.

Programs such as food banks and school lunch programs are short-term crisis solutions.

Educational programs on nutrition, food purchasing and basic home money management should be provided in school, and to groups, families and individuals.

1.4 No person should be without access to adequate and safe shelter.

Government, non-government organizations and communities should actively and cooperatively address the plight of the homeless and ensure adequate and safe shelter is available.

1.5 Saskatchewan must recognize and encourage the talents and strengths of aboriginal people to ensure their full and active participation in society. We must remove any barriers which would inhibit the participation of aboriginal people in the life of communities or the province.

Direct aboriginal involvement in making all decisions concerning every aspect of their lives is critical. The first priority should be to settle land claims and treaty issues.

A clear agenda is required in the resolution of aboriginal issues to minimize growing animosities. Negotiations should be advanced with the federal government to effect these changes.

1.6 Women must play a more active role in our social and economic systems.

Policies and programs which recognize and support women's dual role should be both continued and implemented. Flexible working conditions such as job-sharing, variable hours, and parental leave options are necessary to support women in the work force. An incentive program should be implemented to assist two-parent families in having one parent stay at home while the children are in their formative years.

Access to practical assistance for job search and locating child care is necessary for women entering or re-entering the work force. The provision of non-traditional job training and opportunities for women should be support and encouraged.

We should investigate the potential of pay equity legislation (equal pay for work of equal value) to ensure women receive a decent and equal wage.

1.7 Seniors must enjoy a quality of life that includes good health care, housing and transportation. We must enable seniors to be independent.

We should recognize the interdependence of generations and the potential for positive and cooperative inter-generational relations. Seniors have many talents and experience which can be utilized through tutoring, counselling and voluntarism.

Our communities should develop and implement strategies that allow seniors to remain independent. This would

include transportation, social support, and recreational opportunities. Support to seniors with special problems relative to loneliness, retirement, depression and alcoholism should be provided.

The issue of elder abuse and exploitation of elders should be confronted through education, awareness, prevention and treatment.

Seniors who need financial support should receive it. To ensure that housing is available to all seniors, a graduated cost system of housing based on need should be considered including group homes, single room occupancy in enriched apartment dwellings and senior housing.

1.8 Our multi-cultural heritage demands that communities, families and individuals exhibit understanding, respect and equal opportunity for minorities and those who choose to immigrate to our province.

To maintain an inviting climate for immigration, we must foster an understanding and appreciation of various cultures through multi-cultural education. We should offer support to assist immigrants to integrate into society.

1.9 The issues of family and personal violence must be confronted in an active way. Our focus must be on preventive education and meeting the needs of victims.

Wide-spread preventive public and professional education campaigns are recommended. We should address the causes and roots of violence and break the silence surrounding the issue. Other recommended forms of counselling and education include programs directed at children, particularly those who have been abused themselves or have witnessed abuse. We should ensure education and support for teenagers regarding date rape, cycles of violence, suicide and self-esteem.

Pornography, stereotypical images and violence on television and in movies should be discouraged.

Expanded support programs for victims are recommended. This would include interval/transition houses, safe homes, second stage housing, support groups, crisis lines, sexual assault centres, family service bureaus, outreach programs and follow-up programs. Access should be ensured for those people who face even greater difficulties, such as rural, northern, immigrant, elderly and aboriginal people and those with disabilities.

Severe penalties for abusers should be applied to offenders by society and through the criminal justice system. Sentences could include mandatory treatment programs aimed at changing the belief systems which allow for violence against women and children.

1.10 The correction system must provide real incentives for recovery and change.

Training provided should be closely aligned to those skills required after release.

Significantly more social and financial support should be available for "re-entry" into the community.

Opportunity for change should be easily available during confinement to reduce the high costs associated with repeat offenders. For example, concentrated education regarding drug and alcohol abuse and other addictions should be a major thrust for those incarcerated.

OUR FAMILIES

Our Goal Is:

Saskatchewan families are healthy and supportive. When needed, we provide services to families both to maintain a healthy situation and to deal with crises. We respect our children and have integrated them into all parts of society and our lives.

Recommendations

1.11 Our society must promote parenting skills.

The essence of good parenting is learned in the family. Good parenting skills and the values of parenting are first experienced in a family environment. However, families do require assistance. Support should be more readily available to families in time of need. Early intervention can minimize the implications and costs associated with unnecessary family breakdown.

To promote good parenting skills and avoid crises, family life classes should be offered for parents with accessibility for new parents in particular. Classes for adolescents teaching values, caring and sex education should also be available. Lifestyles education and lifeskills should be taught in schools.

To address problem situations, strategies include crisis nurseries, respite nurseries, parent aides, parent support groups and crisis lines to avoid frustration and

abuse. Sharing of skills is an important aspect of these strategies.

Children should have an education which equips them to make wise choices about their sexuality. Both sexes should be taught equal responsibility.

1.12 Tangible support must be given to individuals and families who have accepted responsibility for the care of special needs family members.

Support should be given to these individuals and families who are primary caregivers in the form of special "parenting" classes, counselling, crisis centre services and respite services.

Consideration should be given to tax credits or incentives for families to look after senior or other family members who would otherwise require home care services or institutional care.

Those being cared for, such as the mentally ill, require rehabilitation and support services when re-entering the community. Their primary caregivers need support programs to aid in the development and/or recovery of those being cared for.

1.13 The variety of family structures must be recognized through provision of formal and informal support systems.

Child care services with standards for quality and staff training should be available without regional disparities. This includes the provision of child care in or associated with secondary and post-secondary schools so that young parents may complete their education. Child care spaces for infants and children of shift and part-time workers should be available.

Subsidies for child care must be delivered according to need. Tax incentives (equal to subsidy amount) should be available where one parent stays home.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Our Goal Is:

The people of Saskatchewan are committed to excellence in the education of our children and of our citizens. We provide equal education opportunities for all our people. Partnerships are developed with families, business and the communities to meet our educational needs.

Recommendations

1.14 Saskatchewan schools must continue to implement the seven required areas of study in the "Core Curriculum".

Core curriculum is a major and long-term initiative adopted by the Saskatchewan education system and should be continued. This includes required areas of study, common essential learnings, adaptive component and locally developed options. "Core curriculum" includes: language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health education, arts education, physical education. "Common Essential Learnings" include: communication, numeracy, critical and creative thinking, technological literacy, independent learning and personal and social skills.

Extra-curricular programs should continue to be a valuable part of a student's education.

An option to consider for the province is the introduction of provincial examinations with the intent of ensuring common standards. This would require further discussion at the community level.

1.15 For new development in core curriculum, we should proceed toward a national curriculum.

Because our population is mobile inter-provincially, a national curriculum with some regional adaptation is essential. The consensus approach could be used by the provincial departments of education of each province to research and develop national curriculum content.

1.16 Our education system must prepare youth to be both employers and employees in society. The development of entrepreneurial skills and spirit in Saskatchewan people must be encouraged.

Our education system should include classes in entrepreneurship, budgeting, economic management, consumer marketing, agriculture and financial management. Technical and trade programs should develop technological skills. Because of a global economy and with increased immigration, the education system should also offer languages other than French and English.

To make youth aware of all career and employment opportunities, career education and counselling must be implemented in our educational institutions. At the same time, skills training for jobs and occupations that are available should be provided. Schools should work together with government agencies concerned with job

training and placement. The curriculum should be continually monitored and new technological courses added as our complex society progresses.

1.17 The curriculum must emphasize the development of values such as integrity, responsibility in decision-making, healthy lifestyles and pride in our province and country.

Civics and citizenship courses should be designed to enhance pride and ensure that children have a knowledge of their heritage and an understanding and respect for many cultures.

Government, media, schools and industry should educate people about responsible use and protection of our province's natural resources. The by-words of environment must be: reduce, reuse and recycle. Schools can assist in the general effort to maintain and improve the environment.

1.18 Because Saskatchewan's economy is largely based on agriculture, our educational system must teach children about agriculture, especially future trends.

While a proposed national curriculum would include a core curriculum, there is still opportunity for regional programming. In Saskatchewan, these classes would include Saskatchewan's agriculture and geography and the study of the impact of these on demography and the economy. Future trends should be a vital part of these studies.

1.19 The Saskatchewan curriculum must address with compassion and understanding its "Special Needs Students."

Educational programs should be adapted for special needs students. Intervention to assist students with learning disabilities and behaviour disorders should occur at an early age when it is most effective. We should also address the needs of a changing society with flexibility for teenage parents or other social and cultural situations which require special response. Another consideration is meeting the needs of gifted students through enhanced educational programs.

Courses of study should contain accurate information about disabling conditions and should aim to develop positive attitudes towards these children. Resource materials to support such course contents are required.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Our Goal Is:

The people of Saskatchewan believe in life-long learning. In response, Saskatchewan offers high-quality post-secondary education. Education systems address the needs of our students and citizens by constantly improving instruction, equipment and facilities. The importance of post-secondary education is evident in the wide variety of course offerings, adequate student spaces and decentralization of programs.

Recommendations

1.20 Post-secondary education must respond to a strong demand for access to opportunities.

Adequate funding is necessary for institutions. Lack of personal finances should not prevent capable students from attending post-secondary institutions.

Entrance requirements at post-secondary institutions should be broad and include factors other than academic achievement in high school, including a universal Canadian entrance exam. For example, admission could be based in part on skills appropriate to that profession. Scholastic excellence and potential could be rewarded by a scholarship credit that is received after registering in a post-secondary program.

At the same time it is necessary to avoid overcrowding of classes. A balance should be achieved between overcrowding and the establishment of entrance quotas related only to funding. Program planning should ensure the number of students educated for a profession or trade matches the labour market demand.

Adequate funding is required: to recruit highly qualified educators; to continually update technological equipment to state of the art; and to make libraries responsive to the needs of instructors and students.

1.21 Active research programs at post-secondary institutions in the areas of learning and teaching are necessary for the Saskatchewan education system to be viewed as one of the best in the world.

Mechanisms for exchange and cooperation between practitioners and post-secondary institutions should be established, including the review of teacher/instructor preparation programs by the educational system, parents, business and community representatives. Evaluation of teaching performance at the post-secondary level must ensure students have the opportunity for meaningful input. Standards for post-secondary educators should include demonstrated ability to teach and to communicate with students in a way they can understand.

In Saskatchewan, educators at all levels can remain at the forefront of their discipline by upgrading qualifications on a regular basis and teaching away from their home institution periodically.

Periodic re-certification and upgrading should be required in all professions and trades.

Private vocational schools should be strictly regulated to ensure they meet reasonable standards and industry demands.

1.22 Incentives should be given to encourage the graduates of post-secondary education to remain in the province.

As an example, reductions in repayable student loans could be available based on years of service in the region, community or individual agency. Many of our professionals are trained and educated in our own post-secondary system. These professionals will understand our needs and have the satisfaction of serving the communities where they grew up. Our professionals, in turn, educate others within our province.

Our Goal Is:

The Saskatchewan educational system is responsive to the cultural needs of the aboriginal people. There is no difference between the percentage of aboriginal people and the percentage of non-aboriginal people who achieve a grade twelve diploma.

Recommendations

1.23 Training programs and curricula must address aboriginal culture in a way which supports all people living together in our society.

Through cooperative efforts in our schools, the richness of the aboriginal culture should be enhanced. Appropriate courses and an understanding and appreciation of aboriginal culture should be incorporated in our curriculum. For example, aboriginal cultural activities, such as dancing, story-telling and ceremonies could be promoted in all Saskatchewan schools.

Training programs and a revised curriculum for aboriginal education should be initiated. All K-12 and post-secondary education programs should have a mandatory inter-cultural education component.

Support systems for aboriginal students should be implemented.

1.24 Saskatchewan educators must be among the national experts in aboriginal education.

Experts in aboriginal studies must have the support to carry out extensive research programs.

All educators should include inter-cultural awareness, perhaps through completion of a inter-cultural education program, among their credentials within the next five years.

1.25 Aboriginal educators must be represented throughout the education systems.

OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Our Goal Is:

Saskatchewan has a health care system which is of high quality and universally accessible. Our health care system is enhanced and able to meet the changing demands of our people. We maintain the quality and accessibility of our health care system but ensure its responsible use. We deliver our services efficiently so that our health care is affordable.

Recommendations

1.26 The people of Saskatchewan must accept that good health is an individual responsibility.

There should be more emphasis on prevention of illness and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

Education should be used to focus on "health" rather than "illness", recognizing there will remain significant expenditures on treatment. Prevention is seen as a wise investment to reduce treatment expenditures. For example, the implementation of prevention and education programs on drug and alcohol abuse for children and families would result in reduced costs for the needed intervention and treatment of drug and alcohol abusers.

1.27 Consumers must be allowed a sense of ownership for their health care and a means to control the health care they receive.

Health care consumers should have the information they require to make wise health care decisions. This will help to ensure those who provide health care and those who administer health care institutions and delivery services are held accountable.

1.28 Professionals, para-professionals and volunteers are service providers in our health care system and their roles must be re-assessed.

The full range of professionals and para-professionals, who are effective service providers in our health care field, should be utilized. For example, nurses may be the first contact to the health system.

Educational programs must reflect the needs for specific professionals such as physiotherapists, nutritionists and medical technologists. To encourage professionals to work in Saskatchewan, health care training could be subsidized in return for a commitment to remain in Saskatchewan for a specified period of time.

1.29 Home care services which allow people to stay in their own home wherever possible must be enhanced.

We recognize home care services as a cost-effective and caring alternative to institutional care.

Reallocation of funding is required to adequately meet the demand for home care services.

There are some efficiencies to be gained through better coordination of home care and day hospital services.

1.30 The delivery and use of services in health care facilities must ensure the most effective and efficient system.

Health care consumers should have the information they require to make wise health care decisions and ensure ownership of their own state of health.

Efficient and appropriate use of hospital services will minimize hospital stay. This would include the utilization of day surgery whenever possible.

The recommendations in the Saskatchewan Commission on Directions in Health Care Report respecting regional hospitals should be adopted. This includes using regional hospitals to perform services and refer to base hospitals only when necessary.

Nursing home care or home care assisted living is less expensive and more appropriate than hospital care. A means should be sought to shifting long term care patients from acute care beds to more cost effective alternatives.

Inter-provincial cooperation should be encouraged for sharing training, technology and expertise in highly specialized medical procedures, particularly between Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

1.31 The Saskatchewan Commission on Directions in Health Care Report should form a basis for further discussion and implementation based on increased efficiency and cost effectiveness.

The Department of Health should adopt a strategy to make progress in dealing

with the content of the Commission Report. This strategy should include a process for continuing the consultation started by the Commission with all health care providers; such as dentists, optometrists, and chiropractors.

In addition to those recommendations specifically mentioned elsewhere, as noted in the Commission Report, we should work towards integrating the mentally ill as members of society and providing community and supportive living services for these people.

1.32 Future discussions on health care should include an evaluation of the ethical issues associated with advanced medical technologies.

2. Community Security and Stability

The Oxford Dictionary defines a community in two ways: first as a joint ownership or shared interest; and second, as an organized political, municipal or social body of people living in the same locality. Community is both a physical organization of people and a state of mind. This report confirms the spirit of the definition. Communities include neighbourhoods, rural areas, hamlets, towns and cities which separately or collectively provide services to people. Communities also embody the shared goals of the people who live and work within them.

In our travels across Saskatchewan, we were told that there are three keys to the survival of communities:

Historically, Saskatchewan people have been known for a pioneer spirit of co-operation and self reliance. We often heard that this has changed to apathy and reliance on governments. Many individuals are feeling frustrated with, and alienated from, all levels of government and other institutions designed to serve us. There must be a fundamental shift in our attitude toward each other, our communities and our province.

At Consensus Saskatchewan meetings we heard concern expressed about the loss of small business and population and the adverse effects of these losses on community viability.

At the most basic level, communities exist to provide goods and services for the people who live in and around them. The quality of community life may be enhanced by the extent to which services are available.

It has become clear that there must be changes to the structure of community administration and service delivery to meet the expectations of Saskatchewan people.

Many Saskatchewan communities will survive and thrive in the twenty-first century. The fundamental requirement for survival is "economics".

The members of Consensus Saskatchewan recognize that an adequate family income, earned through employment, will help to create a positive attitude amongst residents of the province.

From our consultations with the people of the province and our consideration of the information provided in the form of briefs, we have identified the following key areas that require special attention or have particular potential in helping us to achieve our vision of community security and stability:

- Community attitude;
- Local initiative - how communities support local business;
- Tourism - economic diversification within a community;
- Economic and social environment - restructuring Saskatchewan communities; and,
- Primary services - employment; health care; education; culture, recreation and sport; environment; social programs.

Community survival depends very much on the will of the people and our initiative in seeking out opportunities for ourselves, our families and our communities. The life and spirit of a community depends on the creativity and leadership inherent in the local population and above all on the will of the people to "make it happen".

COMMUNITY ATTITUDE

Our Goal Is:

We have pride in, as well as respect and responsibility for ourselves and our communities. The people of Saskatchewan have a positive attitude.

Recommendations

2.1 Locally, regionally and provincially elected officials must be more accountable to the constituents they serve. The constituents, in turn, must take more responsibility for providing input to their elected officials.

The members of Consensus Saskatchewan encourage a shift in the nature of our democracy from a representative to a more participatory form of government. This transition may be achieved through several processes including:

- **"Freedom of Information"**
- **"free" votes in the legislature**
- **plebiscites using available technology**
- **"recall" (a mechanism to remove an elected official from office)**

It is not the purpose of this report to specify the parameters for the use of these processes. However, it would be our intention that plebiscites would be used only for significant issues that would have an impact upon all the citizens of the province. "Recall" would be a mechanism reserved for serious and sustained abuses that require redress. This mechanism would not become a tool of partisan purpose.

2.2 Governments at all levels have the mandate to lead the people they serve. It is the responsibility of all citizens to ensure accountability of governments and to be responsible and accountable ourselves individually and in the larger units of family and community.

Issues of responsibility, accountability and initiative cannot be legislated. Behaviours can be modified and attitudes changed through positive reinforcement by politicians, media and public service institutions. The desired attitudinal/behavioral change is from dependence on governments to an increase in self reliance, individual initiative and community co-operation.

Citizens should demand accountability of politicians at all times, but especially when they are making "election promises".

2.3 Our society must separate needs from wants in making demands on government.

Our government and its fiscal policies are a reflection of our own attitudes. We should be more discerning in our demands. If we want to see reduced demands on government and the economy, we should be prepared to share that responsibility with others. Things can be good in Saskatchewan for everyone. We have to be prepared to

work to achieve results without expecting more in return.

2.4 Individual communities must determine their own priorities and ensure that services which are not provincially funded and which are important to them are maintained either through volunteer service delivery or through their own funding.

The current proliferation of government grant programs is confusing. Economics dictate that not all of these programs will, or should, survive.

Because it is the media's role to reflect the life of the community, there should be positive reflections of Saskatchewan life.

LOCAL INITIATIVE - How Communities Support Local Business

Our Goal Is:

We have viable communities which attract and sustain a variety of businesses and services.

Recommendations

2.5 It is the responsibility of communities to develop and promote an economic and social environment that encourages new business.

Communities should identify their own strengths and resources and build upon those strengths. A variety of services and facilities may be available within one community or might be shared among a number of communities on a more regional basis. Recreational and cultural facilities and specialized professional services may be a part of such sharing arrangements.

While the provision of a wide range of health and education services meets the needs of community members, it should be recognized that these services also provide employment in the community and attract new businesses and people.

Communities should consider initiatives, including tax breaks, that are designed to foster new business and to assist existing businesses.

2.6 For communities to remain viable, it is imperative that local people support community business to the fullest extent possible.

Local business should earn the support of the community. "No interest" loans to residents of communities who choose to "shop at home" is an example of businesses creatively managing this issue.

2.7 The government should restructure the present system of grants and subsidies to small business and redirect any savings to an interest rate stabilization program.

An interest rates stabilization program would protect small business ventures and farm owners from interest rate fluctuations.

2.8 Direct grants to businesses should be restricted.

A business case should be made for each grant received. Taxes resulting from a new business should be enough to offset the grant within a specific time period.

2.9 Financial institutions must ensure that identical rules for business financing apply in urban and rural areas.

Although this is a matter of corporate policy, we urge the provincial and federal governments to work with financial institutions to ensure flexible financing policies support business development in rural as well as urban areas. Easier access to short and long term financing encourages business growth in our communities.

TOURISM - Economic Diversification Within a Community

Our Goal Is:

Each community or region of the province has a tourism plan that is unique to its area.

Recommendations

2.10 The development of a tourism plan for a community or region will depend on the planning and initiative of the local people.

This plan would include choosing a community or regional theme and promoting it.

Viable communities require more than one industry. Tourism is a potential growth industry for many communities. Communities, businesses and individuals should encourage residents of Saskatchewan to explore our province. Tourism begins at home!

2.11 Community signage for tourist facilities and services must be increased, upgraded and highly visible.

2.12 Communities and business must promote awareness of direct sales tax refunds to out-of-province tourists.

Forms for this purpose should be sent to business establishments and made available to tourists to claim sales tax refunds.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT - Restructuring Saskatchewan Communities

Our Goal Is:

Regionalization of communities and rationalization of services to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of provincial and municipal government services. This contributes to economic survival of communities.

Recommendations

2.13 The provincial government must take the initiative to effect the rationalization of local governments and provide leadership in establishing efficient, practical and rational common boundaries for:

- **Education**
- **Health**
- **Social Programs**
- **Protective Services**
- **Cultural and Recreation Services**
- **Government Services**
- **Emergency Measures**
- **Ambulance Services**
- **Transportation and Communication Systems**
- **Environmental Management**

Saskatchewan has 538 urban municipalities, 298 rural municipalities, 116 union hospital districts, 45 home care districts, 13 provincial community health care regions, 8 provincial mental health care regions, 108 ambulance districts, 6 provincial social services regions, 115 school divisions, 11 regional colleges and a host of other service delivery areas. None of these have common boundaries.

We propose that in the course of addressing the issue of common boundaries, those involved also examine the possibility of including electoral constituencies within this framework.

Each region should have a regional council. The mandate of this council would be to ensure coordination of services, sharing of resources and the elimination of duplication.

The introduction of regionalization and rationalization suggests the need for flexible tax structures to generate more revenue at the local levels, allowing the province to move away from revenue transfer payments. The term "local" should come to mean regional.

Local and provincial governments and urban and rural associations should be involved with the general public in addressing the issue of rationalization. Northern communities should also be included in this process.

The implementation of local government rationalization should be a co-operative process.

Fundamental principles on which this recommendation is based include:

- gain in economic benefit through efficiencies;
- benefitting from the economies of scale;
- gain by the reduction in duplication of services;

- provision of equitable tax assessment and levy;
- the development of expertise and leadership; and,
- provision of equal opportunity for all.

This plan should be presented to the public in a non-partisan fashion.

2.14 The establishment of new facilities, closing or changing the mandate of old facilities and scrutiny of activities and budgets must be done on a regional basis.

This would remove such decisions from the political agendas of parties and politicians. Since board members would be from within the region, it would be easier to demand and receive accountability. This board should be a non-partisan group to reduce the patronage stigma.

2.15 Authority, responsibility and accountability for program delivery should be vested in regions. A continuing evaluation of regional programs and services shall be undertaken to ensure they are meeting the needs of the communities within the regions.

The trend of government today is toward increasing decentralization of services. Decentralized and regionalized public services can result in a more responsive delivery system. Decentralization of government services should be encouraged if cost effective.

2.16 Transportation services must appropriately support movement of people, products, equipment and other services within and between regions.

2.17 Aboriginal land claims must be settled. The province must ensure no loss of assessment revenue in the process of negotiation.

Many communities, although they favour negotiated settlements, are concerned about the possible impact on their tax base.

PRIMARY SERVICES

Our Goal Is:

Communities nurture our people by providing opportunities for, and access to, employment, quality health, education, culture and recreation, social programs, and a clean environment.

EMPLOYMENT

Recommendations

2.18 Communities must develop an employment plan that includes an inventory of employment opportunities, business opportunities and resources.

Some Saskatchewan communities are facing massive unemployment. This has been the case historically in the north and increasingly in the rural south. In many areas, the economic situation is such that it is difficult for existing businesses to expand and for new businesses to be established thus inhibiting the creation of new employment opportunities.

Work for welfare is seen by many as a positive community employment program. As an incentive to supplement income and to provide work experience, programs should be revised and made available for those unemployed or on social assistance. These programs must also include training and upgrading.

2.19 Communities must have an understanding of, and a sensitivity to, business and entrepreneurship as essential to the well-being of the community.

2.20 The provincial government must take measures to expand our population base through immigration and through migration from other parts of Canada.

It is noted that Quebec has been negotiating with Ottawa to increase the number of immigrants to that province. Saskatchewan should initiate a similar process. Immigrants with certain designated skills and abilities are important players in the future viability and prosperity of Saskatchewan.

Immigrants have historically proven to be valued citizens of our province, gaining employment for themselves and their families and providing employment opportunities for others.

Saskatchewan also has the potential to attract people from other regions of Canada. Affordable housing, high quality health and education services, and an unspoiled natural environment are among the advantages we have to offer.

2.21 Northern development must create employment for northern peoples, and in particular, northern youth.

Unemployment for aboriginal youth is a major problem in the north. Job creation from current development in the north has been insufficient to meet the demand for jobs by northerners.

HEALTH CARE
Recommendations

2.22 Communities must actively promote voluntarism to support expanded home care programs, health care promotion and other health programs.

These programs can be coordinated or delivered by non-professionals and professionals.

2.23 Regionalization of health services, with regional boards, must be implemented to ensure a full range of basic community care services.

Common boundaries should be developed for improved co-ordination of various services. This regionalization will avoid duplication of services wherever possible, support the availability of primary care within a specified radius and promote better use of regional hospitals.

Some professionals, such as dentists and nutritionists, can provide services in different locations within a region instead of from a single location.

Rural communities are experiencing significant difficulty in recruiting and retaining physicians.

Regionalization and rationalization of services in the health care field is essential in addressing the need for better distribution of physicians and specialized health care programs in our rural communities.

Consideration should be given to the creation of regional or "super" boards as a means of rationalizing the use of health care facilities and programs in the region. The number of persons on Health Care Boards could be decreased to make the Boards more manageable. Training programs should be established which will help orient the trustees (board members) and keep them up-to-date with issues and developments in the health care field.

EDUCATION
Recommendations

2.24 Communities must have access to elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education and adult training and upgrading through the use of the province's distance education network.

There should be an assessment of the need for post-secondary education within communities to meet the requirements of students of all ages.

Technology provides an opportunity to improve the delivery and quality of programs at a reduced cost. Distance education programs and computer based learning aids have enhanced education in the north and rural areas and should be promoted to bring post-secondary, adult education and vocational programs to most communities.

Extension of the post-secondary education system will allow people to remain in their communities.

The utilization of distance education at the elementary and secondary levels will allow access to special education classes for those in need — both the gifted and

the disadvantaged. There will also be opportunities to provide specialized and technical classes to all schools with interested students.

2.25 Saskatchewan educational facilities must be fully utilized by the public.

Immediate steps should be taken to fully utilize educational facilities on a 12 month basis and for extended hours. When regular classes are not in session, co-curricular activities should be on-going as well as classes in up-grading/re-training, distance education, and/or adult education. Such steps could include incentives for educational institutions and the development of policies which encourage greater use.

2.26 The education system should be rationalized to reduce administrative costs, competition between communities and duplication of services.

Boundaries within an acceptable radius of larger centres should be re-defined; the number of school divisions reduced; and the expectation of the people in regard to their need versus want, should be qualified.

The government of Saskatchewan should examine the regional service delivery model as a more efficient mode of administration. An option is to provide financial incentives to school divisions that decide to consolidate into one larger administrative unit.

The Department of Education should critically review current provincial educational delivery systems to avoid duplication, to promote ongoing communications and to ensure equivalency of programs.

The government of Saskatchewan should revise the current governing structures of post-secondary institutions. Boards should be more representative and better reflect the will of the people.

2.27 The governance structure of our post-secondary institutions must be reviewed to ensure they are sensitive to changing social and economic needs.

Universities, technical schools and regional colleges play an important role in the economic and cultural life of our communities. They should stay in touch with the clients they serve. Governing structures of post-secondary institutions should be flexible and allow for direct community participation in setting goals and priorities.

CULTURE, RECREATION AND SPORT

Recommendations

2.28 Each region must have an arts' plan developed within and between communities to foster co-operative programming that meets the interests of the population.

Amenities that enhance the quality of life are a concern of many communities. Cultural programming is often neglected or receives less than adequate funding.

2.29 Active involvement in the arts and cultural activities must be provided for and encouraged.

Our society is increasingly aware of the intrinsic value of art. We are proud and supportive of the visual, performing and literary arts created, presented and preserved in the province. Our artists require the time and financial resources necessary to create their art. The programs of the professional arts community are working to achieve excellence and are increasingly varied, dynamic, imaginative and innovative.

High priority should be given to the arts and the artists of Saskatchewan.

Funding and support should be provided to the arts by individuals, local communities and the provincial government.

Efforts should be made to provide an enriched outreach program of arts throughout the province, which would include artist-in-residence programs; travelling visual, performing and literary arts programs.

Consideration should be given to establishment of a summer school of the arts to be managed and operated by an autonomous board of governors.

2.30 A recreational strategy must be developed within and between communities to make maximum use of facilities and human resources, and meet the need for access to recreational programs.

Many communities are concerned that costs associated with providing facilities, particularly those associated with sporting endeavours, is prohibitive. There appears to be an unproductive, and often wasteful, competition among communities to invest considerable tax dollars in recreational complexes that are often under utilized and can not be financially supported.

2.31 Communities should provide for and encourage active involvement in sports and recreation activities. We must provide a wide range of community-based sports and recreation activities for fun and fitness.

Funds should be directed to activities that encourage participation in advanced levels but not necessarily in highly competitive sports. We should continue to support a wide range of community-based instructional programs. User-pay policies for minor sports programs tend to exclude many children from active participation.

2.32 Voluntarism should be recognized as instrumental in maintaining quality-of-life in the community.

Our society requires a new understanding of voluntarism that utilizes and recognizes volunteers and maximizes the collective benefits and personal satisfaction.

Volunteers can play a variety of roles in a community. They might provide direction to agencies and organizations by serving on boards and commissions. By acting as peer counsellors, youth advisors or mentors, volunteers can provide direct services to those in need.

Shared programs among communities could provide the training that volunteers often need.

Organizations, communities and the province should recognize volunteers for

their vital contributions and provide funding for training and coordination. The media should continue to pay special attention to the contribution of volunteers.

Encouraging youth to become volunteers in their communities would enhance their self-esteem and sense of responsibility.

ENVIRONMENT
Recommendations

2.33 Communities must demonstrate a concern for environmental issues and implement programs to enhance, protect and maintain a healthy environment.

Environmental quality affects our day-to-day life. Communities should become involved in programs such as waste management, air quality and land use.

2.34 Each urban community must provide green spaces.

Such areas have tremendous potential for natural protection, environmental education and demonstration.

2.35 Steps need to be taken to ensure adequate supplies of good quality water for agricultural, domestic, industrial and recreational purposes.

Our province should plan for efficient and effective water use.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS
Recommendations

2.36 The assessment of need for social programs must be undertaken at the community level.

All social programs are not required in all communities. Programs can be developed and in some cases, funded locally, to address the needs identified. Alternative means to meet the need for social programs are best developed at the local level.

3. Economic Expansion and Diversification

Economic expansion and diversification of the provincial economy are crucial if we are to achieve our vision of Saskatchewan's future. The cycles of agriculture and our reliance on fluctuating world markets for our resource based products make it difficult to achieve the continuing economic stability that is needed to keep our young people in the province, to ensure that our small communities will survive, and, most important, to give our people that spirit of optimism so important to maintaining positive and progressive development.

Those who attended the public meetings of Consensus Saskatchewan expressed frustration with the many features of our economy that seem far beyond our control. Economic factors such as high interest rates, world trade wars, farm subsidy wars, and thus, our apparent inability to control the destiny of our province, all contribute to a sense of anxiety for the future.

We should take steps to bring as many of these variables as possible into our control and we should stabilize the economy so that the people once again can look to the future with enthusiasm and optimism instead of anticipation of yet another economic crisis. We must build confidence for those who would invest in our province. The Saskatchewan of the future must work even more in the spirit of cooperation that, throughout our history, has been an important value in our communities.

Given the accelerating advancements in communications technology, corporations no longer need to be located near major metropolises to conduct their business. Indeed, Saskatchewan is uniquely poised to provide new and existing businesses a quality of life that has become of increasing importance. Clean air, lower housing and insurance costs, a negligible commute time and a telecommunication network that is second to none, provide a welcome alternative to the pollution and over-crowding facing big cities.

Successful and profitable undertakings must be looked upon with pride. As we concentrate on diversifying our economy, we must allow those of us who are successful to be proud of successes and to benefit from them. This success motive is what must dictate which projects are developed in the province. Political ideology or allegiance is not a criteria for determining which economic development undertakings are supported.

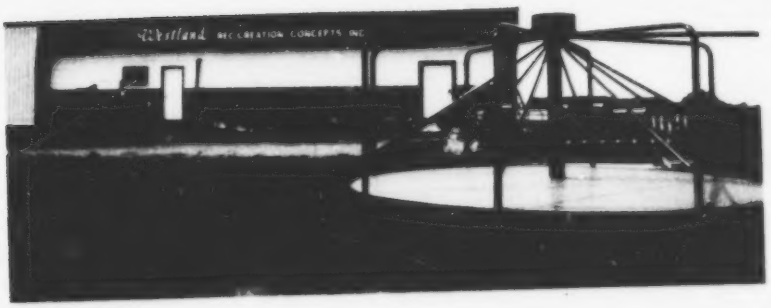
It is also important that new industries and businesses get support if they are to survive in a very competitive economy. We urge consumers to support local businesses. We urge local businesses to recognize the long term value of treating the local markets fairly so that they survive and grow.

As we open doors to increased immigration to this province from outside Canada, it is important that new residents find a range of employment opportunities that match the skills they bring with them. Saskatchewan people must develop a community of support that shows appreciation for new Canadians' contributions to our economy and society and an economic climate that rewards their hard work.

Through consultations with the people of the province, presentations by specialists in a variety of areas and consideration of studies that have examined the Saskatchewan economy, we have identified the following key areas that need special attention or have special potential as we proceed toward our vision of expanding and diversifying the economy:

- **Expand and diversify beyond our traditional resource based economy;**
- **Expand and diversify within agriculture;**
- **Further develop our tourism industry;**
- **Expand value added processing of our renewable and non-renewable resources;**
- **Develop an industry based upon production of environmentally safe products and services; and,**
- **Further develop science and technology industries.**

The recommendations that follow in these sections are directed at many groups both public and private. Some of the recommended actions can only be undertaken by individual citizens. The purpose of this is to clearly show that it is not only the responsibility of government to work toward our vision of the province in economic development and diversification, but that there is a role for everyone who lives in the province.



INDUSTRY DIVERSIFICATION AND EXPANSION

Our Goal Is:

The impact of the cyclical nature of our resource based economy is reduced through diversification and expansion into more small scale manufacturing, niche markets, cultural industries and high value added processing of products for domestic and international markets.

Recommendations

3.1 Government policies and programs, at all levels, must create a healthy and stable business environment which contributes to the viability of small business and cultural industries.

There are many examples of government policies such as Venture Capital Corporations and community development corporations and Small Business Loans Association. which have had a positive effect on the local economy. The most important aspect of these programs is that they are locally controlled, they assist most in the product development and test marketing phase and they encourage local initiatives. Government should attempt wherever possible to reduce the "red tape" that complicates and restricts small business operation.

Our cultural industries such as film making, arts and handicrafts are developing well but will require further enhancement if they are to reach their full potential. These industries are ideally suited for operation on the small scale.

3.2 Universities, government and researchers must find an effective means to communicate information about research and development discoveries, new markets, and the potential application of new technologies to those who are in a position to take advantage of them.

Efforts to communicate information through Rural Service Centres, through access by computer to public data-bases, and the networking of research information such as that undertaken by the Saskatchewan Research Council and the National Research Council are good ideas. University and other researchers should be encouraged in their efforts to go beyond simply publishing a research paper. They should continue into the development stage of ideas and then communicate these ideas to those who can translate them into commercial undertakings.

3.3 Economic expansion and diversification must become a long term commitment for the local community and for all levels of government. Programs to assist small business and farmers must be long term with specific sunset clauses to facilitate planning.

Each community should undertake a long term strategy at the local and regional level and continue to work toward achievement of long term objectives. Procedures and policies at all levels should be enabling and support development. The continuity of

provincial government programs regardless of which party is in power is important for development over the long term. Consideration should be given to a method of informing communities of new businesses which are looking for a community in which to locate.

3.4 Provincial and municipal governments must make further development and improved maintenance of our roads and highways a priority. Saskatchewan will also require an effective regional air service to link all of our larger communities, within the province and to cities beyond our borders.

Our success in secondary processing and manufacturing will be dependent upon our ability to develop a first class transportation system. This system will be essential if we are to successfully move our products and produce efficiently and cheaply to market.

To make maximum use of our existing infrastructure and services, industrial centres and tourism should be regionally developed to achieve more efficient production and distribution of output. To ensure success they should be supported by a system of superior roads and a sophisticated communications system.

The province also requires a north-south airlink to the United States. Both Saskatoon and Regina require direct access to international flight.

Saskatchewan requires an efficient and affordable regional airline service network scaled appropriately to local traffic.

3.5 Some large economic development projects are beneficial and must be undertaken when and where appropriate.

Large projects should proceed when a sound business case can be made. Government has an obligation to follow environmental laws governing such development projects and should be forthright in the sharing of information. Communities should be informed of and involved in the planning for these projects. Direct government involvement should be minimal.

3.6 Trade promotion must be undertaken as an integral part of economic expansion and diversification.

Given the increasing importance of trade for the Saskatchewan economy, the province should endeavour to expand the international market for Saskatchewan products. Government has an obligation to search for and explore potential markets for Saskatchewan products and to cooperate with private enterprise in capitalizing upon them. The province should develop its industrial policy directed toward the global market. Efforts should be made to promote education on international trade practices through post-secondary education.

AGRICULTURE

Our Goal Is:

We continue to produce the highest quality food products for domestic and world markets and further improve our capacity to process what we produce.

Recommendations

3.7 The government must focus its efforts on promoting the development of value-added processing activities in the province.

The key to agricultural diversification lies within high value-added processing of all agricultural products. This is essential and should focus first on our traditional products of cereal grains; meat products and finished food products. The fact that value-added processed goods are less susceptible to countervailing duties is a further incentive to process more of our products at home.

There are benefits to using government resources to attract large business concerns to locate in the province. However, large projects should not consume too great a percentage of our development resources. Greater benefits can be achieved by using available government resources to develop small local processing businesses.

3.8 The provincial government needs to work vigorously with other governments, including federal and international, to bring about the changes that are necessary in areas such as grain pricing, interest rate subsidies, and freight rates.

In the long run our farmers should receive a fair return for their products. The global agricultural economic environment is beyond the sole control of the provincial government and our farmers. High interest rates and low commodity prices due to the trade wars are major problems in the Saskatchewan farm economy. Trade and monetary policies are federal responsibilities. The provincial government should vigorously urge the federal government to resolve issues surrounding GATT negotiations, grain subsidy wars, high interest rates and the Western Grain Transportation Act.

3.9 Producers must act to take advantage of emerging markets for non-traditional meats (fowl, fish and game).

Producers should undertake to further develop their knowledge of how best to raise "exotic" livestock, both as a means to develop low fat foods and as a method of achieving premium rates of return for meat production.

3.10 Municipal governments must encourage development of market gardens and greenhouses.

Market gardens are an effective method of intensive farming which generate greater produce from smaller acreage. Irrigated market gardens are less

susceptible to drought conditions. Similarly, greenhouses can be used to lengthen our growing season and move us toward growing vegetable and/or "exotic" crops that command a high rate of return.

3.11 Producers must take advantage of opportunities that exist in growing, harvesting and marketing of horticultural and native crops.

New crops of this kind and their potential markets need to be identified and promoted by our universities, government and other research facilities so that they can be brought into commercial production.

During the public meetings of Consensus Saskatchewan we heard success stories about growing of "crops" such as mushrooms, both wild and domestic, wild rice, and Saskatoon berries. We heard also how processing of these products in Saskatchewan, and marketing them as an export, could command premium prices. As we move increasingly into this kind of production and processing, we may wish to give consideration to designating these products as: Having high quality, and, where appropriate, "naturally" produced.

3.12 Provincial and municipal governments in concert with private enterprise must work aggressively to ensure that farm inputs (fertilizers, chemicals, equipment and fuels) are produced in Saskatchewan wherever possible.

Creation of these industries in Saskatchewan is a logical extension of our farm-based economy. It is important however, that Saskatchewan-made products be competitively priced relative to the international market.

3.13 The provincial government must examine the pricing of major farm inputs to ensure the regulatory framework provides for competitive prices.

Prices for major inputs such as farm chemicals, fertilizer, fuel and farm machinery should be competitive if our farm sector is to be internationally competitive. For example, existing regulations require farm chemicals to be tested for registration using brand name rather than active ingredients. This increases chemical prices by creating a major barrier to the development of generic products after the patent has expired.

3.14 Producers must pay special attention to the development of chemical free farming and "natural/organic" agricultural products.

Because of the emergent demand for healthier foods, there is a small but growing market for chemical free products. As this market continues to grow, producers should explore not only the markets for these products but also the best techniques for their production.

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Our Goal Is:

We develop our natural resources to derive maximum economic benefit while respecting the principles of sustainable development. In particular, we ensure that northern residents are involved in establishing future directions and receive a fair share of the benefits from resource development.

Recommendations

3.15 Wherever feasible, the federal and provincial governments must encourage more value added processing of our renewable and non-renewable resources within Saskatchewan.

To offset the impact of the ups and downs in market prices for our resource based products, we should pursue a strategy that provides for more secondary processing before these products leave our province. Secondary processing will expand employment opportunities and create new businesses that bolster the local economy in smaller communities. Processed goods are less subject to countervailing duties than are resource products.

3.16 The government must ensure that we are self-reliant in meeting our energy requirements.

Government should inform and encourage the public to explore the use of alternate forms of energy such as nuclear, wind, solar and other emerging methods.

3.17 All industries and government bodies involved in managing the forest must agree on a long-term action plan to ensure that the forest is fully utilized and perpetuated.

The forest industry currently is fragmented in its approach to forest management and a variety of vested interests hold major differences of opinion respecting use of forest resources. These parties should resolve these issues and come to agreement on a long-term plan of action for use of our forest resources. The government should implement and enforce regulations to ensure that these long-term plans are carried through.

3.18 Government and university research must find a wider range of uses for forest and natural resources.

There should be greater development of our forestry resources. This should not be done to the detriment and depletion of our forests. Afforestation (planting trees in areas where there currently are none) in southern areas in the form of shelter belts offers opportunities for new sources of wood products while at the same time promoting soil and water conservation. It also would provide an alternate use for marginal agricultural land.

3.19 Extracting and refining minerals and finding new uses for our abundant mineral deposits must be encouraged.

The extraction of minerals should be recognized as a large source of royalties and employment. The most environmentally friendly refining methods should be encouraged. There are opportunities in the further development of many of our natural resources such as our deposits of silica sand for glass, kaolin for clay products and granite for masonry stone.

3.20 The government must ensure that our fish stocks in northern lakes are maintained for sport and commercial fishing.

Fishing in northern lakes is a priceless asset for both tourism and as a source of food. Current restocking programs should be expanded so that harvestable fish species are reintroduced to lakes wherever they have been depleted.

TOURISM

Our Goal Is:

We expand and accelerate tourism development throughout the province: to increase the number of visitors we have each year; to ensure that they enjoy and extend the length of their stay; and to ensure they return to visit on other occasions.

Recommendations

3.21 Every Saskatchewan person must become a salesperson for the province.

For this to occur Saskatchewan people should understand the importance of tourism to our economy and know about the various attractions that we have in the province. Saskatchewan Education, the media, regional colleges, universities and local school boards should enhance their programs so that all residents have a more thorough understanding of our history, geography and historical sites.

3.22 A collaborative effort of business interests, municipal governments and local community groups must identify, develop and promote more local and regional attractions.

Initiatives at the local and provincial level should produce and widely distribute quantities of high quality promotional materials. Marketing should be targeted to achieve the maximum efficiency in the use of such materials.

3.23 The provincial and municipal governments must provide quality road access, signage and support services for tourist attractions.

Current accessibility to some feature tourist sites is poor. Gravel road access to locations is inadequate if we expect out-of-province visitors to choose these sites as a destination. Highway maintenance and upgrading programs should reflect our desire to have tourists travelling throughout the province.

3.24 TISASK (Tourism Industry Sask), Chambers of Commerce, the regional colleges, The Restaurant Assocation and the Hotel Association must further support, promote and expand hospitality training for service sector and retail staff.

It is in everyone's best interest to have well-trained staff dealing with the public. Hospitality employers throughout the province need to make this a priority and to make it possible and worthwhile for their employees to take training.

3.25 The province must exhibit more flexibility in licensing fees for hunting and fishing.

In order to build the tourist industry, both short and long term recreation needs should be addressed when issuing licenses, for example, short term fishing and hunting permits should be available.

ENVIRONMENT

Our Goal Is:

Economic expansion and diversification objectives are achieved while sustaining a healthy provincial environment.

Recommendations

3.26 Governments, universities, industry and special interest groups should encourage the establishment of firms involved in research and development and manufacturing of environmentally safe products, services and technology.

Protecting our environment and development of environmentally safe products will be of benefit to our residents and a boon to our economy.

3.27 Schools, government, industry and the media must promote awareness of the importance of the environment and the consequences of its neglect, and promote the development of strategies to ensure protection.

The quality of our environment is an important contributor to our quality of life and to tourism. We should ensure that it remains that way. This awareness should lead to the development of collective ownership and responsibility for the environment. Adequate environmental education programs should be provided.

3.28 Landowners, environmental groups, governments and universities must undertake measures to ensure conservation of soil, water and energy, and must be active in repairing existing environmental damage.

Current programs of these groups should be enhanced and accelerated. The technology developed for environmental clean-up will have a world-wide market. Conservation can be the most effective way to reduce the costs of energy consumption in a society. As well, conservation can generate cost saving in the long-term by avoiding the need to pay for environmental clean-up and repair.

3.29 Government must regulate, monitor and strictly enforce standards to maintain a healthy environment.

The government should not only regulate but lead by example.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Our Goal Is:

The potential for science and technology is developed to provide both clean industries and premium employment opportunities in our provincial economy.

Recommendations

3.30 Education and training at the high school, university and technical levels must produce graduates capable of working and leading in advanced technology areas and business. The people of individual communities and industries in the province must have substantial input into the course offerings of post-secondary institutions.

There should be a close association between the needs of our advanced technology businesses and the kind of training that our young people receive not only at university and at Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, but also in high school. If we are to diversify into these enterprises, there should be training available at all levels that will contribute to our success in science and technology.

3.31 Funding of research and development in science and technology must be a priority for universities, industry and government.

The development of new ideas and new processes is of crucial importance if we are to build upon our current successes and offer a wider opportunity for creative initiative. Only through greater investment in research and development can we assure ourselves a place at the leading edge of development in any area.

The results of research and development should move from the laboratory into the business world. Our universities, industry and government should ensure that technological innovations are commercialized to improve the competitiveness of Saskatchewan businesses.

3.32 The government, universities and industry must encourage the development and expansion of centres of excellence, starting in areas where we already have a natural advantage such as advanced technology, communications, health care technology and agriculture.

The science and technology initiatives in Saskatoon as a centre of excellence are a good beginning. Centres of excellence should be developed in other communities as well. While these centres may begin with our current areas of strength, we should not limit our potential, but should consider a wide variety of areas in which we can excel. These developments can bring immeasurable societal benefits in terms of quality of life and employment opportunities.

3.33 The provincial government must consider protecting the new ideas of Saskatchewan residents by ensuring that patent laws are not indirectly subverted by patent infringement.

New ideas are a valuable asset. Intellectual property and ideas are as real as physical property and should be protected under the law. However, individuals and small firms may be unable to protect their ideas or defend against a patent infringement because of high legal costs at a time when revenues have not yet accrued. Perhaps a cooperative patent insurance scheme using a small premium, a percentage of patent revenue and a provincial government guarantee could be developed to provide legal support to entrepreneurs with patentable innovations.

4. Responsible and Efficient Management of Our Financial Resources

Government deficit and the resulting accumulated debt were cited as problems facing Saskatchewan people in every community in which a public meeting was held. Interest on the accumulated debt is now the third largest expenditure and rapidly growing. Consequently, we are no longer able to afford all the programs currently funded by government. Three courses of action may be considered to address the problem. We can increase taxes, reduce program spending, or implement a combination of tax increases and program reductions. We must begin now to live within our means and stop borrowing from our children's future.

Global grain price wars, drought and decreasing demand for our resources are among the reasons that the Province has borrowed heavily to maintain and enhance the delivery of programs. Some factors which contributed to a level of programming in the mid-1970's and early 1980's were good harvests, reasonable grain prices and royalties from resources such as potash, uranium, oil and natural gas. Deficit financing has been deemed acceptable by some to accommodate short term downturns in the economy but when difficult times last for several years, as they have in Saskatchewan, the accumulated debt becomes an overwhelming problem. In Saskatchewan the cost of interest on the accumulated debt is now half a billion dollars every year. The annual interest is the equivalent of $2,000 per family of four.

The cost of funding interest on the public debt is in direct conflict with public demands for increased services. Any flexibility government has to meet changing needs is being eroded. Consensus Saskatchewan hopes to provide guidelines to government on its role and responsibility in alleviating the emerging economic crisis. The recommendations are as serious as the problem and are intended to be the first step. There is no painless cure.

The recommendations will have an impact on our current debt, our methods of budgeting, handling deficits and providing grants and subsidies. The methods of funding our social programs and our tax structures are questioned. The area of accountability is included as it is seen by the public as important. People need to be made aware that the current economic situation is a result of over-expenditures. The full costs of demanded services have not been fully explained or understood. The "ownership" of the debt is not only government's, it belongs to each of us and it is irresponsible to pass it on to future generations.

We must begin to live within our means so that our children can afford a similar standard of living as we do today and are not burdened with an overwhelming debt from which they have no hope of recovering.

All political parties in conjunction with all the various stakeholders need to work together to balance the budget. There is no time for commissions or independent studies to ascertain which programs or which grants would be affected.

All Saskatchewan people need to develop a resolve to eliminate the provincial debt and develop a sense of pride in seeing it reduced.

From our consultations with the people of the province and information provided by specialists in a variety of areas, we have identified the following key areas that require special attention as we proceed toward our vision of responsible and efficient management of our resources:

- Public debt and deficit budgets
- Taxes and royalties
- Budgets, accountability and responsibility
- Health
- Education

Our responsibility is clear, the path is hard, but the benefits will be substantial. We must meet this responsibility by making difficult but necessary changes now while we still exercise a measure of control over the situation. If we fail to make these choices within the next three or four years, the consequences will be increasingly more catastrophic with each passing year.

PUBLIC DEBT AND DEFICIT BUDGETS

Our Goal Is:

Saskatchewan has a balanced budget and has developed a plan to be debt free.

Recommendations

4.1 Action must be taken immediately to eliminate budgetary deficits and to reduce the accumulated debt over a period of time. Reduction of the accumulated debt must be done in such a fashion that the people of Saskatchewan are aware that it is being reduced. It is recommended that Saskatchewan have a balanced budget in the year 1993, be debt free by the year 2015 and have an accumulated surplus which is equal to 20% of budgetary expenditures by the year 2025.

The problem is so severe that interest on debt is now the third largest government expenditure exceeded only by health ($ 1.5 billion) and education ($ .9 billion). With each passing year the debt grows, eroding our capacity to fund programs that the people of Saskatchewan take particular pride in pioneering.

The terms **'annual deficit'** and **'accumulated debt'** warrant some explanation. An **'annual deficit'** is the difference between revenues and expenditures if the government spends more than it earns in taxes and various other sources of revenue during a budget year. The **'accumulated debt'** is the total of all previous annual deficits and surpluses. The government borrows money equal to the total accumulated debt and then pays interest to institutions from which it borrows. At some point the government should repay what it has borrowed but can not begin to do this unless it has money left over at the end of the budget year. When deficits are incurred for several years in a row the amount owed grows and so does the cost of interest. The interest costs are now affecting our ability to provide essential programs. The longer we wait the more difficult it becomes to overcome the problem and the consequences become increasingly more unpleasant.

4.2 Legislation must be passed which severely restricts the possibility of a deficit.

Government, when faced with an exceptional situation which requires the expenditure of funds not provided for in the budget, should be required to appeal to a review board of well-informed citizens to incur the expense. Appointment to the board should be non-partisan and determined by the person's particular area of expertise.

4.3 We should implement a special tax targeted to reducing the accumulated debt.

Tax on individuals has probably reached its upper limit but the public meetings indicate that the public would be receptive to a special tax targeted to reducing the accumulated debt providing the tax disappears when the debt is repaid. The government should take the

first step by eliminating the deficit and getting its own house in order.

4.4 We must define areas of provincial, local and federal responsibility so that there is little overlap of program and agenda.

There is a clear need for each government to know what they are responsible for in order to meet their commitments in the most cost effective manner.

4.5 Agricultural subsidies should be reviewed. Price subsidies for agriculture which are a direct result of international trade wars must be the sole responsibility of the federal government.

It is not appropriate that the federal government make provincial participation in subsidy programs a pre-condition. The economy of Saskatchewan cannot afford to assume responsibility for matters under federal jurisdiction.

4.6 To identify essential program priorities, comparisons must be made between government programs provided in Saskatchewan and those in other jurisdictions.

Those that are not provided elsewhere should be examined closely to determine if they are essential and to identify who should pay for them. Those that are provided elsewhere and not in Saskatchewan should be examined to determine why they are not provided here in our province. Provincial governments should not expect to get additional funding from the federal fovernment when unilaterally expanding their own programs.

4.7 "Sunset clauses" to limit the duration of programs should be clearly defined in Legislation for all programs.

The continuation of such programs should require legislative approval beyond an initial three or five year period.

4.8 All programs must be evaluated periodically following the value for money audit concept.

4.9 The government must conduct a complete, comprehensive review and priorization of grants.

4.10 Non-governmental organizations should closely liaise and communicate with one another and with government agencies to avoid unnecessary duplication of services.

4.11 Crown Corporations and all other agencies funded primarily by tax dollars should be required to publish complete audited financial information disclosing salaries, travel, and other expenditures.

4.12 Grants must be targeted to specific needs rather than wants.

Universality is a luxury we can no longer afford. The elimination of the Home Improvement Program is a step in the right direction.

4.13 A statement providing the true cost of publicly funded services must be given to each recipient to ensure that everyone understands that services funded by government actually cost us money.

It is hoped that informing the public of the true cost will encourage everyone to do their part in minimizing waste and abuse.

4.14 The government, the civil service, publicly funded agencies and the general public must be more accountable for the use of money.

This would entail an attitude change toward the spending of public funds. All government staff and staff of agencies supported by grants from government should adapt their attitude toward how much there is to spend. Each and every individual should take personal responsibility for starting to make the changes.

4.15 Privatization should be based on a sound business analysis and should not be based on political ideology.

Each circumstance should be evaluated based on the facts. Proceeds from privatization should be applied against the province's accumulated debt.

4.16 The involvement by government in business of all types should be evaluated.

The government should not be involved in business which can be more effectively and efficiently provided by the private sector.

Any business that government is involved in should be self-funding and use sound business practices. They should generate profits equal to the industry average and not be subjected to political manipulation. This includes crown corporations providing utilities.

4.17 Government must not subsidize the start-up of a new business to the detriment of an existing Saskatchewan business.

Any grants to businesses should be consistent with local and regional long term economic development strategies and be of benefit to the provincial economy as a whole.

TAXES AND ROYALTIES

Our Goal Is:

Saskatchewan has reasonable but competitive tax and royalty structures.

Recommendations

4.18 A mechanism must be developed to ensure and assure us that we are receiving appropriate compensation for our non-renewable resources and that corporate income tax is in line with that in other provinces.

There is doubt in the minds of the general public that the people of Saskatchewan are receiving sufficient compensation for natural resources.

4.19 The structural arrangement for the collection of royalties must be such that Saskatchewan processing of natural resources is encouraged.

Royalties for exported natural resources should be higher than those processed in Saskatchewan.

4.20 A comprehensive review of the tax system must be conducted to ensure it is fair and rational.

There is a need to reform our tax system at all levels to reflect changing social and economic conditions to ensure that all persons contribute their share, without exception. Restructuring the delivery of government services on a regional basis, with greater municipal involvement, may have implications for our tax system. For example, if municipalities have broader responsibilities for service delivery they may need to diversify their tax base.

4.21 Business and property tax on industry must reflect the industry's ability to pay and must not be so high as to deter development.

Property tax makes no reference to the profitability of the company. A tax on income and profit is more appropriate for business and industry.

4.22 Consideration should be given to establishing targeted taxes which would change as the cost of a particular service changes.

For example, the fuel tax could be designated to pay for road maintenance and construction. If the costs of highways goes up then the fuel tax rate would rise to cover the cost.

4.23 The government of Saskatchewan should collaborate with the federal government in administering common tax collection systems.

This would minimize the combined administrative cost to the taxpayer and streamline the administration for business and individuals.

4.24 Innovative investment opportunities must be promoted to encourage investment in Saskatchewan.

Both local and external sources of investment should be tapped. Investment capital is required to ensure economic stability of Saskatchewan and increase our tax base.

BUDGETS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Our Goal Is:

Public sector budgetary processes are revised to ensure that the governments look beyond short term budget strategies and plan for the medium to long term.

Recommendations

4.25 A five year fiscal plan must be included with the estimates tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

Government should share the information and be held accountable.

4.26 Specific provision must be made in the provincial budget to include all future commitments for which no provision has been made.

This is directed to fulfilling the current obligation for funding pensions which are omitted from the balance sheet and are reflected only as notes to the financial statements. This is a problem that has been growing for many years and no funds have been set aside to fulfil significant future obligations.

Our Goal Is:

All citizens demand and receive accountability from all levels of government and actively participate in public affairs at all levels.

Recommendations

4.27 A Freedom of Information Act must be enacted to promote more open government and allow the free flow of information related to the use of public funds in every aspect of government operations.

4.28 A complete annual financial report should be made available to the public which includes ALL government agencies.

At the present time there is no consolidation of financial data which provides the public with a complete financial picture.

4.29 The Provincial Auditor's role must be expanded to include supervision of periodic value for money audits or some similar process which is free from government influence.

4.30 The Provincial Auditor must have access to all government and crown corporation financial records.

4.31 The Provincial Auditor's role as an independent servant of the Legislative Assembly must be confirmed.

4.32 All party committees should be established to determine appointees to provincial boards, commissions, management positions in crown corporations, etc, and thus reduce "political patronage".

4.33 The severance and retirement package for MLA's should be comparable to the public service.

Currently, the public's perception is that they are excessive.

HEALTH

Our Goal Is:

Saskatchewan's health care system is efficient and affordable.

Recommendations

4.34 Consideration must be given to some form of individual health care contribution.

Consideration should be given to the introduction of a health care premium, utilization fee, co-payment similar to the Prescription Drug Plan, or provincial taxable benefit. However, inability to pay should not impede access to the health care system.

Because of changing demographics, the demands on health care will increase. In order to live within our means, certain economies should be effected.

People should realize that with the right to health care comes responsibilities. They should be accountable for themselves and others.

Personal contribution to the funding of health could ensure a sense of ownership and responsibility for health care decisions. It can also provide a deterrent to the abuse of the health care system.

People are concerned about the cost of health care and our ability to pay. Eliminating abuse is seen as one way to reduce the units of service used, which tax dollars should fund.

Expanded use of the new plastic "Health Services Card"(personal health registration card) could improve the policing of abuses and help prevent "double doctoring" and over-prescribing of medication.

An independent review board should be established to monitor abuse and take action against all abusers of our health care system.

The costs of services we seek and receive should be publicized. Abuses should be addressed both by the consumer and the service providers.

4.35 Consideration should be given to the introduction of a Health Care Consumer statement that would specify the "costs" accruing to each consumer for their use of the health care system.

In order to make responsible decisions about health care, consumers need access to information about health care costs.

4.36 Health programs, services and facilities must be reviewed and specific areas of savings identified and implemented.

Health funding accounts for one-third of provincial government expenditures. It is realistic that we look to this area for improved efficiency to reduce the annual deficit.

The establishment of health care facilities should be based on needs and realities, not politics. The delivery and use of services in health care facilities should be effective and efficient. Health care facilities should be staffed on the basis of the needs of the clients. We should make the most efficient and appropriate use of hospital services to minimize hospital stay. Day surgery must be utilized wherever possible.

Budget decisions for health care should be finalized in advance of institutions setting budgets for the fiscal year to promote better planning and more effective budgeting. Allowing well-managed health care facilities to retain surpluses as a reserve for future use would be an incentive for good management. We should review budgeting practices and priorities on a regular basis.

Integrated, regional health care boards would promote the rationalization of health care services in an area resulting in considerable cost savings. Training for board members should be provided to assist them in their planning and decision making.

4.37 A broader range of sources for funding for health care must be investigated.

Our society should promote public participation in financing for health care through capital fund raising and local funding. We might also give consideration to implementing a special lottery for health care funding. Communities should share responsibility for health-related fund raising activities.

EDUCATION

Our Goal Is:

Saskatchewan's education system provides a continuum of life-long learning for all its citizens. The system is efficient and cost-effective and has adapted well to demographic and social changes.

Recommendations

4.38 Education must continue to develop partnerships with families, business and the communities to help them deal with social and economic issues.

The education system cannot be all things to all people.

4.39 Saskatchewan Department of Education and school divisions must constantly search for more effective and efficient use of resources. Currently, we cannot afford additional or expanded systems.

The Department of Education and individual school divisions should consider using contracted services where feasible and effective. For example, para-professionals should be used to a greater extent to support teachers.

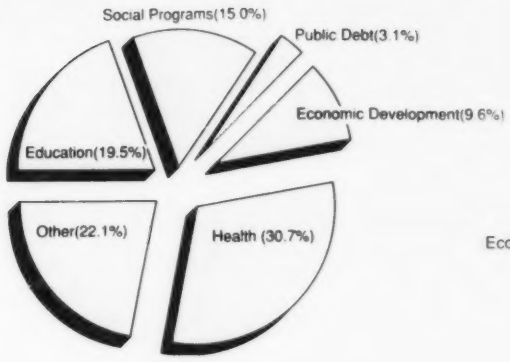
4.40 In the education systems, specific areas of dollar savings should be identified and implemented.

4.41 The government of Saskatchewan should allocate funding for educational research.

In Saskatchewan there should be a demonstrative link between research, policies, planning, evaluation of results and how provincial funding is allocated.

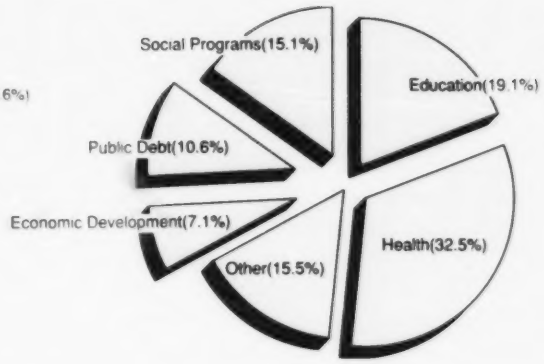
Expenditure Composition

1984-85



Total= $3,295 Million

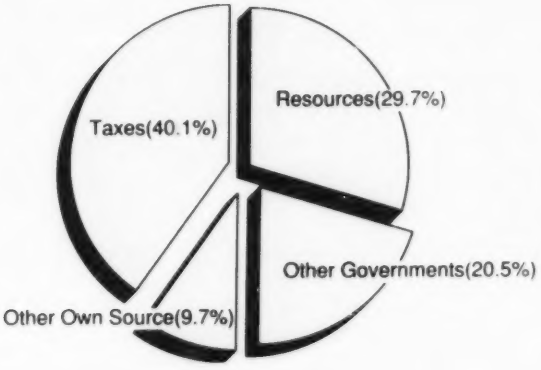
1990-91



Total = $4,641 Million

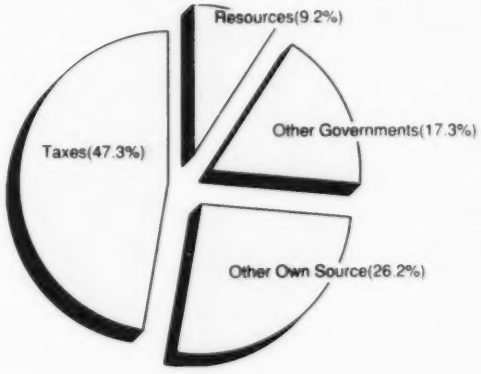
Revenue Composition

1984-85



Total = $2,916 Million

1990-91



Total = $4,278 Million

CONCLUSION:
The Next Steps

"We all have a responsibility to generate a pride in ourselves, our community, our province, our country"

Consensus Saskatchewan public meeting participant, May 1990.

This thought was expressed many times during the public meetings of Consensus Saskatchewan, and it is a theme which runs throughout our final report. We all share the responsibility for the future of our province and its people.

Consensus Saskatchewan, as a group of volunteers, adopted a mission **"to reach consensus in creating a vision for our province that will meet the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century"**. While we have achieved our mission in the presentation of this report to the Premier and the people of Saskatchewan, we have come to realize that our work is not over. Creation of a vision for our province simply sets the stage for the next steps.

We titled the vision section of our report "From Many Peoples Strength" because we believe that the future destiny of the Province of Saskatchewan rests in the hands of our people. The phrase is translated from the Motto **"MULTIS E GENTIBUS VIRES"** which is found on the Coat of Arms of our province. It captures the essence of our province very well. Our survival and our growth come from the will

of our people and from initiative in seeking out opportunities for ourselves, our families and our communities. Our people are our most important resource.

The people of our province cannot rely on our personal resources alone. To build the future that is described in the vision, Saskatchewan will need the co-operative efforts of our governments - provincial, municipal and federal. We must look for innovation in our social institutions - education systems, health care systems, social support services, community facilities and services - to assist the efforts of the people.

We must ensure that our aboriginal people feel truly at home in our province, fully participating in the social and economic institutions that make up the fabric of our society.

Education in all its many facets is a priority if we are to achieve our blueprint for the future.

The family, no matter how we choose to define that term, must be our priority, for it is in the family that our values and attitudes are developed. It is our families which provide the basis of our communities and our social support systems.

Many of our communities will survive and thrive in the twenty-first century. It has become clear, however, that there must be changes in the structure of community administration and service delivery to meet the expectations of Saskatchewan people in the future.

Our economy is troubled. We are challenged to diversify our economic base. We must put our talents and our ideas to work. We must build confidence in those who would invest in our province and ensure that opportunities for investment are available. Successful and profitable undertakings must be looked upon with pride. Government policies are important in the creation of a healthy and stable business climate, and in setting the standard for economic expansion and diversification without detriment to our provincial environment. Government must regulate, monitor and strictly enforce standards, but must also lead by example.

Finally, we must learn to live within our means. Doing so requires accountability on the part of government for the wise management of our fiscal resources. It also requires that we as citizens of this province clearly define our priorities and have an opportunity to be directly involved in decisions about how our tax dollars are spent. Freedom of information and public participation in democratic processes are the key to accountability. To quote one Saskatchewan resident:

"The concept of ordinary people being allowed to contribute to the formation of government policy is important."

Consensus Saskatchewan public meeting participant, May 1990

Meaningful participation in public decision-making is not possible without information. Wherever public meetings were held, the Consensus Saskatchewan members heard a demand for better information from governments, from social institutions, and from the media.

Consensus Saskatchewan provides a vision of the future and a series of goals and recommendations which provide a blueprint for action. It was not within the parameters of Consensus Saskatchewan to specify the details for the blueprint. The goals and recommendations are the outline of the type of society we believe Saskatchewan people seek to build. Much more work must be done to create the details of the blueprint if we are to be successful in reaching the vision for the future of the province. Now that we know where we are headed, energies can be concentrated on how best to get there.

The first step of Consensus Saskatchewan was the invitation to all Saskatchewan people to attend a series of public meetings to share their hopes and aspirations for the future. The members of Consensus Saskatchewan now urge each and every Saskatchewan person to work with us toward building our province of tomorrow. As volunteers in this process, we remain committed to action. With the submission of this final report of Consensus Saskatchewan we will disband as a group, but we will not simply walk away and see the report of Consensus Saskatchewan sit on a shelf.

We recommend that consideration be given to reconvening Consensus Saskatchewan three times over the next two years to assess progress on the implementation of the report. As well, Consensus Saskatchewan members are willing to assist on projects which might evolve from recommendations of this report.

We do not intend to recommend other specific strategies for response to the report to governments or institutions. We believe the following should be principles for action in the future.

- **We must build on the pioneer spirit of our heritage.**

  While we promote the concept of individual responsibility, we cannot lose sight of our heritage of co-operation and mutual caring.

- **We must begin to act immediately.**

  This is true of governments, individuals, communities, businesses, and institutions if we are to create the future we desire. We must also continue to monitor our progress and re-evaluate our priorities through public discussion and debate.

- **We must build upon the experience of Consensus Saskatchewan.**

  People expect to participate directly in the decisions which affect their lives.

- **We must "think globally, act locally".**

  While sometimes thought of as a catch phrase of the futurists, this is also what we heard from Saskatchewan people. We are looking to our future on a global scale, but we feel it important to take responsibility at an individual and community level for action to achieve that future.

- **We share responsibility and accountability for our actions and for those of the institutions we put in place to serve us.**

  We must hold our government officials accountable for their decisions, and we must take the opportunity to become informed participants in our democratic processes.

- **Public participation in decision-making at every level of government must be the way we do business in the future.**

  Consensus Saskatchewan has demonstrated the principle of direct involvement of people in democratic processes. This public participation in decision-making is at the leading edge of change in our society. It is a principle that should be adopted by governments and other publically funded institutions.

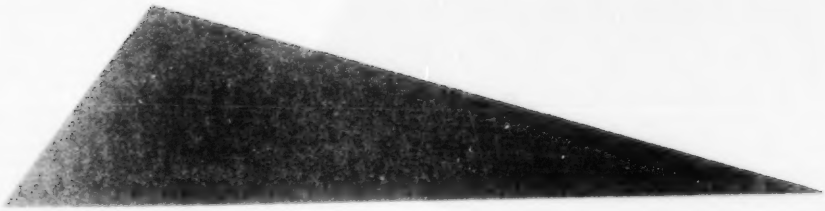
  Consensus Saskatchewan has also demonstrated that it is not necessary to establish a permanent bureaucracy to undertake public consultations. A group of people can accept responsibility in leading such a process if they have tools and the commitment to do so. Government should act as a catalyst and a support to public decision-making processes but should not add to its bureaucracy to do so.

"Government priorities are not well defined. They are too far removed from the day to day lives and concerns of citizens."

Consensus Saskatchewan public meeting participant, June 1990.

There is a lesson in that statement for all of us. Government priorities come from the people whom the government was elected to serve. We achieved a consensus on a vision for our province. We believe that this vision may change over time as circumstances in our province, our country and our world change. We also believe that vision comes from the people. Governments must go to the people to develop the vision of a society. If we have **consensus** on the vision, each and every one of us can play a role in making our vision a reality. All our citizens will then take pride in that Saskatchewan's blueprint is leading the way.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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Bill Reader	Deputy Minister Rural Development
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APPENDICES

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Maidstone
Kindersley
Canora
Fort Qu'Appelle
Kamsack
Elrose
Govan
Hafford
Watrous
Eston
Whitewood
Turtleford
Indian Head
Herbert
Choiceland
Leask
Oxbow
Maple Creek
Rose Valley
Spiritwood
Prince Albert
Nipawin
Rosetown
Estevan
Warman
Porcupine Plain
Swift Current

Grenfell
Kenosee
Prelate
Arborfield
Big River
Weyburn
Consul
Shellbrook
St. Walburg
Lloydminster
Cabri
Saltcoats
North Battleford
Hudson Bay
Shaunavon
Stoughton
Lampman
Davidson
Christopher Lake
La Loche
Regina
Hanley
Melfort
Meadow Lake
Buffalo Narrows
La Ronge
Elbow

Melville
Goodsoil
Tisdale
Imperial
Cumberland House
Bengough
Central Butte
Wakaw
Saskatoon
Lumsden
Moose Jaw
Yorkton
Wilkie
Kerrobert
Foam Lake
Lestock
Macklin
Mortlach
Minton
Dysart
Mankota
Humboldt
Lemberg
Ponteix
Wynyard
Harris
Preeceville

Assiniboia
Esterhazy
Langham
Rockglen
Milestone
Moosomin
Gravelbourg

Kinistino
Biggar
Sedley
Watson
Red Pheasant
Cut Knife
Colonsay

Mossbank
Carlyle
Rosthern
Naicam
Radville

BRIEFS PRESENTE TO CONSENSUS SASKATCHEWAN

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Bergen, W.E., Saskatoon
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Derksen, S.A., Langham
DeSantis, Mario, Weyburn
Dubuc Save The Post Office Committee
Kindersley and District Arts Council
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Migowsky, Duane, Maple Creek
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Nuclear Education Council
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Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils
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Regional Employment Development Committee, Saskatoon
Saskatchewan Association of University Teachers
Saskatchewan Cultural Exchange Society
Saskatchewan Disabled Persons' Coordinating Committee Incorporated
Simmonds, Verna, Regina
Southeast Saskatchewan Sports Council
Stop Taking Our Post Offices committee
Venture 32 League
Weyburn Aviation College Development Committee
Weyburn Committee Against Family Violence
Woodlot Association
Wood, Willis, Estevan

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